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MEMOIRS

AND

CONFESSIONS

OF

CAPTAIN ASHE,

Thomas
1776 - 1835

AUTHOR OF

"THE SPIRIT OF THE BOOK,"

&c. &c. &c.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

"Rien n'est beau que le vrai,
"Le vrai seul est aimable."

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MEMOIRS AND CONFESSIONS

OF

THOMAS ASHE, Esq.

CHAP. I.

Vanity mingles in all his Successes.—Travels in the Escort of the Governor of Saint Francis.—Volunteers in a perilous Expedition.—Signalizes himself.—Is again treated as a British Minister.—Arrives at Pernambuco in the Style of a Diplomatist.—Forces the Passes of Life.—Reaches Saint Michaels.—Joins the Forces of Sir J. Moore.—Returns to Plymouth a ruined Man.

THERE is something of vanity mingled with all our earthly enjoyments: there is no worldly pleasure but is either purchased by some pain, or is attended with it, or ends with it. A great employment

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is neither got without care, nor kept without fear, nor lost without trouble. Greatness is troublesome almost to all mankind; it is commonly an uneasy burthen to them that have it, and it is usually hated and envied by those who have it not.

Previously to my elevation to the friendship of the Governor of Saint Francis, I travelled on in a quiet and peaceable manner: my principal fare was the flower of maize, mixed up with the milk of cocoa, dried fruits, and simple water. Satisfied with little, and grateful to Providence for dangers escaped, and blessings enjoyed, my days glided away in ease and tranquillity, and seldom did my steps, or even my wishes, wander far from the path I was destined to pursue. But no sooner had I associated with his excellency the governor, than he took up the idea, from my passports, of my being a British ambassador, and treated me with a reverence and ceremony little

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agreeable to one who was ever a lover of nature, of freedom, and independence.

In other respects, my journey was very pleasurable and interesting. The governor was deeply affected at the recital of my shipwreck, and assured me that on his arrival at Saint Francis he would grant me a safe and honourable escort, and provide me with such letters as would secure me every comfort and aid I could desire, on a route so extremely long and insecure. But it was not his excellency's intention to return to the seat of his government till he had effected the purpose of his tour. He had left Saint Francis, and taken with him some troops to oppose some Ladrones and Maroons, who had infested the borders of the river; and soon after my joining him, he received information of their being assembled in great numbers in the interior, although he had frequently beaten them, and trusted that they had been so deterred as never to think of

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assembling in any considerable force again. He very handsomely proposed to send me under an escort to Saint Francis, while he made another final effort to annihilate these robbers and rogues; but I preferred to accompany him, and he gratefully accepted my services.

The Ladrones we went against were composed of a body of runaway negroes, vagabonds of colour, and a few demi-civilized savages, who now occupied certain fastnesses in the interior of the country, from which they made frequent excursions to plunder the plantations; destroying all the white people who fell in their way, and massacreing, with the most savage and ingenious cruelty, those faithful negro slaves whom they could not seduce, either to run away with them to the woods, or, with the treachery of spies, to betray their masters. This expedition was a perilous one. We had to make our way through forests impenetrable but by secret

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paths, which were known only to the runaways, and to one or two guides, on whose fidelity, though they undertook to conduct us, we might not confidently depend.

The desperadoes, whom we went to attack, knew well by what ways we must approach. They lay concealed in the situations the most favourable to their purpose. From the midst of thickets, and from behind trees, they discharged shots upon us so skilfully, and so thick, that many had fallen before we could come near the recesses where we expected to find them in strength. The stoutest hearts among us were terrified; and had it not been that the danger seemed even as great behind as it was before us, we should all, probably, have turned, and taken to flight. Still we went on, encouraged by our guides, whom we confided each between two soldiers, and threatened with death, at every new

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discharge which burst from among the thickets.

It was always my way to brave every danger, and to gain distinction, cost what it would. But amid the dangers that now environed me, I must own that habit was nearly forgotten. I began to think of my girdle of diamonds, and how much safer they would be with me in the town of Saint Francis, than in a jungle filled with assassins and Ladrones. While I was in this mind, we had come, as our guides told us, within less than fifty yards of the principal retreat of our enemies. Turning my head at a sudden rustling among the bushes, I saw a musket levelled directly against me, and a man in the act of discharging it. With a pistol, which I fortunately held cocked in my hand, I hastened to fire. His shot anticipated mine, and wounded me in the head; but, ere he could recover his piece after delivering his own fire, he

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was shot dead by mine, and the guides saw him fall. "It is the chief," cried they. A volley of shots was the same moment discharged upon us from behind the surrounding trees. Our people fired in return, and rushed forward. Within a few moments, we found ourselves in possession of the strength against which our march was directed, and the dead chief was in the possession of our soldiers. Their stores of provisions and ammunition were ours; and we found also their women and children, who gave us information, by which we were enabled, in the course of that and the following day, almost to exterminate the whole party of Ladrones, without losing above two or three more out of our own number. On the third day we resumed the road to Saint Francis in triumph; and as the success was judged to have been, in a great meaeure, owing to the fall of the chief by my hand, I was honoured, as if that, which was to me the effect of for-

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tunate accident, had been achieved by my extraordinary courage and presence of mind.

On our arrival at Saint Francis, the governor accommodated me with his own house; treated me with the strongest evidences of friendship; liberated a dozen prisoners of my selection from the jails; and, on the recovery of my wound in the head, sent me off to Pernambuco with horses, guides, ammunition, and provision, more than equal to the journey, however immense in danger, character, and extent. The governor of each township provided amply for all my incidental wants; accorded me a guard of honour during my stay in each place, and uniformly, at my request, liberated the prisoners, with few exceptions, from all their respective jails. Thus, with an assumed character, did I perform an immensity of real good, and arrived in Pernambuco, after the expiration of three months constant travel, with the respect

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and esteem of all the superior authorities, as well as the love and good-will of the people and the soldiery. By this turn of fortune I was exceedingly confirmed in a resolution I had formed, of casting off all disguise in future, and, by means of the sale of my few remaining diamonds, placing myself in such a situation as would again enable me to consider myself one that had honour and character to prize and preserve. These principles and sentiments prevailed over every other, and I resolved to repair to Spain from Pernambuco, there to force the passes of life, and close it with the reputation of a brave soldier.

An interesting occurrence can never be too short, nor can a striking sentiment be clothed in too few words. We love to see the whole of the building at once, not to be tired with the length of a naked portico, in moving from apartment to apartment; or led through the gardens, to be brought into the back door of a par-

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lour, after we had forgot the figure of the saloon.

Conscious of the propriety of these reflections, I shall now proceed with my history, and with as few wanderings of the heart and mind as the nature of the events and the state of my feelings will admit. It is known to the reader that I arrived at Pernambuco under the most flattering circumstances, and with the best possible intentions. To turn these to the best advantage, I put down and buried every assumed appearance, and wore no other than my own real and genuine character. When such was my conduct, I never failed to make several valuable friends: nor did I fail in this respect at Pernambuco. That city abounded, at the time of my arrival, with English merchants of respectability, whose sensibility was considerably excited by the report of my shipwreck, and by their knowledge of the extraordinary and dangerous journey I had made through dis-

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tricts never before traversed but by the natives and persons attached to the Portuguese crown.

Of the English from whom I experienced the most hospitality and kindness was a Mr. Harris. To him it was I confided a portion of my late adventures, and as I wanted a considerable sum of money to defray the expenses of my passage to Spain, and the exigences to be encountered in joining and becoming a member of the Spanish army, acting, as I understood, under Sir John Moore, I prevailed upon Mr. Harris to purchase three diamonds from me for the moderate sum of twelve hundred pounds, which were paid in doubloons, with the exception of a small bill on Liverpool, for seventy-five pounds, made payable to me, and indorsed by "CHARLES HARRIS." I beg the reader to note this circumstance well, as it will hereafter make an important feature in my eventful life.

I now proceed to state, that having

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realized three of my brilliants, though much under their value, I joyfully sought a passage to Spain; but not finding any vessel ready to sail either to that country or Portugal, I took shipping for the Azores, and arrived at Ponta del Gada, the capital of Saint Michaels, after a very fine passage of thirty-five days. I should have mentioned that I met with Captain Sir James Yeo at Pernambuco, and that he had the goodness to offer me a passage to a port in the river Amazons, but this I declined, so determined was I to abandon a life of wandering speculation, and enter the army once again. From Saint Michaels I made no doubt of procuring a ready passage to the Spanish dominions, but in this I was deceived. I had leisure to visit several of the islands, without hearing of any chance; and when I returned to Ponta del Gada, finding no vessel there for Spain, I was induced to hire one for myself, and proceed to Corunna, in the vicinity of which I was in-

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formed the army of Sir John Moore was actively and constantly engaged. The vessel I hired was a remarkably fine Berwick smack; and as Mr. Read, the British consul of Saint Michaels, was of opinion that the English army stood in need of several supplies which the island produced, I made no difficulty of taking a freight from Mr. Read, paying him in doubloons and bills at twelve months, and Harris's endorsement for the sum of seventy-five pounds. The whole freight amounted to about two thousand five hundred pounds, of which, I must again beg the reader to remark, the bill indorsed over to me by Harris formed a part.

With this freight, and with the views I have stated, I left the anchorage of Ponta del Gada, and arrived safe at Corunna, after a rapid run of six days. On my landing I expected to find the Spaniards a high-minded people, bravely contending for their liberties, and combating with an energy against which it would be impos-

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sible for France long to contend. I expected all this and more. But, on the contrary, I found them a cowardly pusillanimous people, unworthy the blessing of liberty and the protection of the British nation. And I found Sir John Moore, though containing within himself all the shining qualities of those men, who, at any time, by their talents, have rendered England formidable to France, though uniting the policy of Marlborough with the genius of Wolfe, and adding the intrepidity of Abercrombie to the skill and enterprize of Wellesley—yes, I found this great general on the retreat; and ere I was twenty-four hours in Corunna, I assisted at a battle under its walls, in which there was not one Spaniard to support the English arms!

It seemed now evident that my evil genius had again visited me, nor would leave me till I should be prostrated on the earth never more to rise. The English troops embarked on the night of the battle. My

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sloop was set fire to, and burnt to the water's edge, while I was striving to get her under weigh. I was cast as a vagabond upon the adjoining coast, and must have fallen into the hands of the French, had I not been perceived by Admiral De Courcey, who was passing in his barge, took me up, and granted me a passage on board the Tonnant to Plymouth, to which place the wreck of Sir John's army principally returned.

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CHAP. II.

The Web of Calamity entangles him.—He realizes his last Diamond.—Moralizes.—Pursues the Coast to the Eastward. Arrives at Weymouth, and makes a Stand.—Takes a House at Broadway.—Studies Nature.—Forms a Museum.—Gathering Clouds appal his Heart again.

THE human mind feels, at certain times, and chiefly in calamity, or when driven forward by some ambitious or lucrative impulse, a natural propensity to lift up, if possible, the mystic veil which providentially hangs over the roll of future events.

It is this general puriency that has given rise to the celebrated oracles of Delphos, to the prophetess of Endor, and, in all ages, to wizards, witches, down to the Egyptian sisterhood of our itinerant soothsayers. On my arrival at Plymouth, how ardently did I wish to meet with a

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Cumæan priestess, who, from the snake enwrapped tripod, might whisper my fate in words more than human, or instruct me how to avoid the evils that were likely to be the result of the failure of my grand Brazilian design!

Never, perhaps, was man more perplexed. Never was the net of calamity trailed with more skill after the steps of an unfortunate being. The object of my diamond scheme was to acquire an immense capital, and from it, in the first instance, discharge all my debts, even to the extent of those contracted by the execution of the plan itself: then retiring from the busy world, to lead a life admired by the poor and envied by the rich. But the issue of this scheme was the destruction of my character, and obligations in bills, to the amount of seven thousand pounds, nine hundred of which were made payable in London, to the order of Mr. Read, and would become due in less than four months. All that remained to

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me, after this immense loss and load of obligation, were six small precious stones, to the value, one with another, of four hundred pounds each. These I negociated with the Jews of Plymouth, for the sum I have named, and immediately left the town, but without any fixed plan for the conduct of my future life, or for the occupation of the present hour. I took the road to Totness, more from accident than choice, and as I found the coast eminently romantic and beautiful, I held it close till I arrived at Weymouth, where I made a considerable stand.

I had now leisure for reflection, and also for remorse. I examined my conduct and my diamond scheme. I began to distinguish the difference between true and false pride. I acknowledged that to the latter were to be attributed all my schemes, all my follies, and all my vices. The love a man bears to himself from the possession of true pride, is the necessary result of his being wise, and

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is at once a portion and a motive for virtue, as it forms a conception of honour in the bosom, that elevates the mind above meanness, and denies it the capacity of stooping to power when there is neither obligation nor merit, nor to vice, however imperious the necessity, or menacing the controul. But the possession or practice of false pride draws on to ruinous speculations and vicious pursuits, of which degeneracy and crime are the result, and terror and contempt the punishment. With these feelings and considerations, I hired a small house at Broadway near Weymouth, resolving never more to be lofty and ambitious, or to forget that the great and Supreme Being, who confounds self-pride, declares that shame shall follow the promotion of fools.

We are apt to look up with with envy at the state and splendour of people who possess superior fortunes: but we see them in a light very different from that

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in which they appear to those who possess them. The man of moderate, nay, of narrow circumstances, who has the appetite and spirit to enjoy the little he has at command, knows a pleasure from it, with which those, whom we are more apt to think happy, are unacquainted.

Although the sphere, in which I moved on my settlement at Broadway, was very circumscribed, yet conscious that happiness is by no means a necessary consequence of wealth, I endeavoured by assiduity and serious thought to make up for the unavoidable deficiencies of fortune. If that fortune denied me the more glaring and expensive pleasures, I was amply recompensed by a true taste for the more worthy and rational. To devote my vacant hours to literary pursuits, or to have my ideas corrected, and my views enlarged, by the study of nature and the works of God, yielded by far a higher gratification than to live in the momen-

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tary applause of an unthinking, giddy throng, to shine in the world, or sparkle on the town.

Being conversant in the ideas of beauty, order, and properties of the works of God, my temper insensibly took a polish from the objects of my studies and contemplations. I transcribed, as it were, something of that grace and superiority I found in external objects into the inward frame and disposition of my own mind. Perhaps no man is more perfect than one in whom the virtuoso passion, the love of order, beauty and nature, prevails throughout, and influences his conduct. Having once established a correctness of taste, elegance of fancy, and purity of knowledge in the things of outward grace, utility, and ornament, could I be such a poor and scanty thinker as to give it no scope in subjects of a nobler kind? Could I be so little consistent with myself, as to be enamoured with the harmony of sounds, and to have no sense of inward numbers,

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the measures of action, and the nicer tones of passion and sentiment? Having acquired a judicious eye in the works of painting and statuary, could I be blind to all the charms of moral limning, the proportion of real life and manners? Whilst I learned to be exact in the knowledge of natural history, and the forms and the character of the works of the Almighty, could I have no regard to the living architecture of my own mind, no thought of inward embellishment, no taste for the more beautiful economy of the human heart, for the order and nature of its affections? Never, surely, can our imagination rest wholly on the mere mechanic and sensible forms of the works of nature, seeing there is provided for them a far more refined entertainment in the theory of moral excellence. No where does the charm of beauty so forcibly prevail as in the moral species. It is to this the naturalist and virtuoso must have recourse for the highest gratification of his favourite

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passion. Virtue alone is the truth and perfection of knowledge; and, as abstracted a way of reasoning as it may be thought, it is however a just one, that a correct knowledge of nature and a dissolute character are the greatest contradictions in the world.

The object, then, of my new pursuits at Broadway, was to confine my attention to the studies of nature and art; to learn knowledge in my very pleasure, and extract wisdom and virtue from the numerous wonders with which I was surrounded. Nor were my studies merely for learned, moral, or philosophical purposes. I pursued them with all my characteristic vehemence, and in a short time formed such a cabinet of natural curiosities, sculpture, painting, and other objects of science and art as stood unrivalled in the west of England. As Weymouth was annually filled with persons of the first information, wealth, and taste, I established a regular museum, and ap-

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pointed a person under me to exhibit or sell the different articles to the learned and inquisitive world. In addition to my house, I built a large gallery for the purpose of this museum. It contained fossils, antiquities, statues, paintings, and drawings; and the revenue, from the receipts of exhibition and the profits of sale, promised to produce an annual income of three hundred pounds or more. Nearly every visitor to Weymouth contributed two-and-sixpence to its support, and Lord Rolle, Lord Warwick, Colonel Cooper of the Somerset, &c. &c. made purchases to the amount of forty and fifty pounds in fossils, which I collected, at the expense of a few shillings, on the Dorset mountains, and along the Devon coast. It was universally allowed that I had the finest collection of petrefactions in Europe; and as I was a perfect connoisseur in sculpture and painting, and began to deal in specimens of a very superior kind to a great advantage, my esta-

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blishment seemed to have a good foundation. The mists of calamity and delusion were yielding fast to a productive and salutary air.

Artificial calm! visionary enjoyment! How ill did it prepare me for that sudden gathering of clouds, that dreadful tempest, which in a single instant arrived and overwhelmed my museum and my fortunes, driving all before it with the sweep of a whirlwind, and leaving me naked in the land, to choose my place of rest where I could, and none but providence my guide!

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CHAP. III.

*He is arrested.—Liberated from Confinement, in deep Distress—He meets with Ellen H.*****.—Is succoured by her, and placed in a small Cottage at Chelsea.—Rejoices in his humble Home.—Glories in the Friendship of Ellen H.—*

Of all the storms that blow, there is none that can equal the storm of calamity. It is a monsoon that always blows the same way, and sweeps every thing before it. The most gallant vessel that ever sailed the ocean of life must yield to its dreadful and overwhelming influence.

The storm which assailed me at Broadway was generated in South America, at the time of my diamond scheme. In terms less nautical, the holder of one of my drafts from Rio Janeiro recognized me at Weymouth, nor left me till I was immured in a lock-up house in London,

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and he master of all I possessed—museum, money, and every thing else held by me in the smallest esteem.

Finding myself now in town, and in this truly melancholy condition, I almost resolved to apply to the extremity of suicide; for the most cruel death would have seemed gentler than the necessity of existence in the deplorable state to which I was reduced. Pierced through with sorrow, I left the lock-up house of Mr. Green in Carey Street, and wandered through the Park to Chelsea; my eyes fixed, my arms folded, my heart fit to burst.

The violence I used to conceal my sentiments occasioned so great a weakness, that as I reached the King's Road, I was compelled to lean against the post of a gateway, or I should have fallen to the ground. While in this state of debility and distress, a lady passing by, stopped; looked at me much amazed, and changed colour. She was attended by a footman

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in livery, whom she ordered to remain at a little distance. I looked at her, and saw her eyes beaming with a sensibility that spoke more than any tongue could speak. She at length broke silence: "Alas! what can have reduced you to this altered appearance, Captain Ashe?" said she. Agitated with contending emotions, I could not forbear uttering a deep sigh, and taking one of her delicate hands, on which I fixed my lips: "Ah, madam, what do you ask?" said I: "what can I say to you? how can I describe the shameful condition I am in?" She remained troubled and confused. I dared not lift up my eyes to look at her; but I let her see tears, which I could not forbear to shed, nor resolve to conceal.

She omitted no arguments to draw my story from me, and with the greatest earnestness pressed me to accompany her, and with the utmost solicitude she demanded my address. Alas! my history was too gloomy and complicated for a fea

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male ear. My dress and look forbade me to be the companion of a woman of fashion; and as to my address, I literally had none to give. Nothing remained to me but some few sparks of that fire which once glowed with so much vigour in my heart and imagination. I made no reply to all her entreaties, but with an irritated sensibility exclaimed: "Oh! leave me. For God's sake leave me! I would willingly remain alone, to have an entire liberty of afflicting myself."

The lady was sensibly afflicted. I remained in a silent stupor. She took this opportunity to draw forth a memorandum book, and to say: "If you have any kindness for, any remembrance of me, take this book; it contains my address, and perhaps the means of making you happy. I have very urgent reasons for desiring to see you. I am not a little concerned that you shew such indifference towards me as to remain miserable, when I am truly anxious to promote your

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felicity. Receive this book; I earnestly wish it; I intreat you; and if it were fit for me to use more urgent terms, I would say, perhaps, I command you to do it." Without knowing what I was doing, or what she was doing, I held the book, and she departed without delay, or bidding me farewell. On being restored in some degree to myself, I opened it, and found in it several bank notes, with some cards bearing the address of Ellen H. Manor Terrace, Chelsea.

These cards were not necessary to inform me who the fair being was that took such an interest in my destiny. From the first moment that she approached me, I knew her to be the lovely Ellen, but I did not avail myself of the knowledge, or think it proper to revive the intimacy which once existed between her husband and myself, when I was in the army, and he in the service of the honourable East India Company. But the divine grace, with which she accosted me, touched me

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so efficaciously, that I immediately changed my desire of throwing off the load of life, and thought only of fitting myself for a re-appearance in the world. As I came to this favourable and unexpected determination, I reached Manor Place, now Queen Street, Chelsea, and seeing by a bill in a window that a small neat cottage and garden were to be let, I lost not a moment in taking them at the low rent of twenty-four pounds a-year; then buying as much furniture and necessaries as answered my own immediate demand, I took up my abode in it the same night, and had no other reflection than how to maintain myself in so humble an asylum for the remainder of my chequered days.

The natural sphere, the natural and moral world of man, is home; and he is either happy or miserable, respectable or contemptible, according as is the character of that home. If the generality of mankind could be persuaded how much force, how much real capacity of happi-

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ness and comfort are contained in the magic word *home*, they would shun all foreign and exterior pleasures, and employ themselves in the careful cultivation of this fertile field.

Whatever the character of my newly acquired little home might have been, this I can say with the utmost confidence, that while in it my life was innocent, my manners pure, my pursuits favourable to sensibility and fancy. No one was more happy than myself whilst I was busied in the arrangement of my little cottage. Every morning I arose to new labours, and I retired so weary to my bed, that I had no time for thought. My garden I improved with my own toil and knowledge; and some time elapsed before I went into London, because I considered the limits of my home to be such as it was inconsistent with my happiness to transgress.

But the principal charm of home consists in the presence of some elegant

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female friend. I had no sooner finished my cottage decorations, than I began to hope that Ellen would visit the humble roof, and approve of the arrangements, and appearance I now made, in consequence of the encouragement and assistance I had so fortuitously received at her hands. I therefore again began a life of hope. And indeed what happiness is equal to that of the man who passes all his days in the midst of hope; who flies from the gloomy certainty of nature, and only plays so much of every game as promises him at least an interesting event! Nor was I disappointed in this hope. Ellen H. who had recently become a widow, was a daughter of the nicest sensibility, who had also drunk wisdom from the cup of adversity, and learned benevolence of disposition from the chapter of disappointments. I waited upon her. She called upon me, and took delight in seeing me rise from the oblivious slough into which I had fallen.—

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Congenial souls soon burn with mutual sympathy. Similar passions, where the same principles of truth and virtue exist, must necessarily produce similar effects. The purest friendship commenced; for esteem is frequently the child of admiration; and when once the exalted pleasures of this god-like virtue are experienced, it is not difficult to conceive how objects, till then pursued with ardour, lose in idea, and sicken in enjoyment.

Friendship, such as existed between Ellen H. and myself, not only fills the chasms of life, but likewise absorbs a multitude of its most shewy pretences. Neither lute, nor lyre, nor mead, nor grove, the circles of the gay, nor haunts of the serious, are equal to its dictates, or the shrilling raptures of its higher exertions. Soon as we sip the virgin honey of sincerity, how despicable do pretended friends appear!—The pleasing, and perhaps the alluring converse of

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former acquaintance loses its usual relish, and the sager aphorisms of grey hairs possess not half their influence. After my renewed acquaintance with this most interesting woman, I honestly confessed my former depravity of taste; I blamed my impropriety of earlier choice; I was vexed that I did not see through the mask of other's artifice, and wondered how licentiousness, or the licentious, could ever charm me.

Ellen spoke in the language of bashful modesty: in the most diffident, yet oppressive manner, she uttered the feelings of her spotless soul. Habitually gay, yet she sometimes appeared like the balmy morning overcast with western clouds; for my misfortunes often affected her; and she valued my happiness more than that of herself or any other being. Nor was her company irksome; a stranger to ennui, to devote her vacant hours to literary pursuit, to spend them in remarks on men and manners, or to have

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her imagination corrected, and her knowledge enlarged, by the social intercourse of this disinterested and intelligent friendship, yielded by far a higher rapture than to move in the great world, to shine at an assembly, or sparkle in the ring.

But see yon sly haggard cynic in the corner, whose clay-cold bosom friendship never warmed! How ghastly he smiles at the description of a feeling, which, from his ill-conditioned composition, he thinks must be romantic! With a design perhaps to censure, he concludes that friendship to woman is sister to love. I deny the universality of the maxim.—Ellen felt for the varied scene of my disappointments, and too plainly perceived, as I have somewhere else said, that my joys were generally but sports of imagination, which hope begot, and time might have realized, had not violent winds from the mountains of passion, monsters from the forests of calamity, or locusts from the land of tyranny, nip-

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ped them in the bud, or trodden them to the earth by main force.—Perhaps Ellen thought, that fraught with honour, and supported by gratitude, I dreaded to ally her to my woes; and her judgment approved my generous motive, while a passion, sweeter than friendship, might have opposed that judgment, and accused my delicacy of thinking. But Ellen was no ordinary woman. Cappadocian like, she apprehended in such a case marriage would constitute misery. My situation forbade it; and she was willing to construe the dictates of prudence to be the mandates of heaven. Be this as it may, our friendship was cemented by an union of souls, and we swore to each other, that neither adverse fortune nor blackest perfidy should ever disjoin us.

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CHAP. IV.

Finds out the shortest Way to be rich.—Turns Public Writer, and declares War against Mr. Cobbett.—Contributes to Blagdon's Political Register with Success.—Engages deep in Controversy.—Takes the Bull by the Horns.

THE shortest way to be rich, is not by enlarging our estate, but by contracting our desires. The rays of happiness, like those of the sun, acquire force by converging, and act more vigorously in a narrow compass.

Fortune, at last wearied with trying that firmness she could not destroy, gave me the transient settlement I have described at Chelsea, and there I first learned these two prudential principles, respecting wealth and happiness. My humble cot was in a confined place, situated between the impregnable castles of pride,

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and the selfish tenements of narrow industry. The natural growth of this spot were the absolute necessaries of life, more essential than pleasant to the taste; products but ill adapted to the appetite of one accustomed to all the luxuries of life. But however partial, ill is always of general utility; because heaven, even in its painful dispensations, regards the advantage of the whole, while to the immediate sufferer it blends compassion with denial, and clemency with correction. By contracting my desires I became happy; and friendship, the virtue of a seraph, the image of divinity, the sovereign balm for every woe, by dividing my causes of complaint, in reality lessened them. While the amiable Ellem was near to me I feared nothing; when in social intercourse with her, I complained of no want.

However, it accorded with my notions of honour and the habits of my life to be industrious: nor had I been ten days

seated in my little cottage before I began to devise some means of recovering my independence, and living as became the nature and condition of man. In this there was no great difficulty. It was natural for me, who had travelled and learned so much, to fall into some profitable pursuit congenial with that spirit of literature and the fine arts which prevailed in London, at the time of my fixing in its vicinity. My only aim was to excel in something nearly allied to such arts and studies as were the objects of general favour; to give me the merit of competition with those who were eminent in them, yet at the same time so peculiar as to exalt me to the dignity of an original, not an imitator or mere follower.

In the first instance, I determined on the life of a political writer. With a high sense of the value of experience, and a due respect for the dictates of superior wisdom, I resolved to venture on discussing some of those political subjects

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which engaged, at the time, so much of the public attention, and occasioned so great a diversity of opinion. In this pursuit, I trust, I was guided by laudable motives. It was my particular wish to ascertain some general truths, by which the varying sentiments of the age might be tried and appreciated. The subjects, which I intended to select, were connected with the order and liberty, the virtue and happiness of society. However I might fail in the execution of the design, I can conscientiously assert, that I was determined to be guided by the desire of detecting error, and assisting in the propagation of truth.

The difficulty was to find a medium, through which to address the public. One-third of the papers employed none but venal sycophantic writers, such as Stewart, Manners, &c. and the remaining two-thirds would give bread to none but plunging, desperate innovators, such as White, Hunt, Clarke, Finnerty, and

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Byng. Besides, their mode of payment was dangerous and degrading in the extreme. Their custom was, to pay for what they printed, and to reject what they thought fit. Thus, in a time abounding with foreign and domestic intelligence, they ceased to print original matter, however good, by which means the writer not only lost his labour for that period, but found himself left totally destitute of bread. Abhorring such men and such manners, I was about to decline so prostitute an employment, when a gentleman of the name of Blagdon, the proprietor of a weekly paper, called The Political Register, gave me a carte blanche to write what I would, stating, that he would print it, and pay me regularly ten pounds per month.

When I entered into this engagement with Mr. Blagdon; his paper was in the lowest chambers of literature, and so much despised, that the newsmen had much difficulty in disposing of two hun-

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dred copies on each publication day. My debut, therefore, was attended with equal humiliation and labour: humiliation in writing what I knew would be unseen or despised, and labour in raising an abject publication, which was plunged so deep in literary mire. However, I did not despair; and as I knew a grand contest in the great political arena would be the most probable means of attracting the attention of the public, as well as of serving the best interests of the country; I cast down the gauntlet in the presence of Sir Francis Burdett, Lords Cochrane and Folkstone, Mr. Horne Tooke, Gale Jones, Roger O'Connor, Peter Finnerty, Mr. Wardle, Mr. White, Hunt, Perry, Cobbett, with all other public speakers and writers, who aimed at the destruction of society for the acquisition of personal interest, or the gratification of criminal ambition; I say, I cast down the gauntlet in the presence of these political and turbulent characters,

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and I scoffed defiance in their teeth, proportionate to their engagement in the contest with me.

Cobbett was the first who entered the lists, and my battle with him was of no little importance to me.

To be engaged in a political contest with men of principle is honourable, but to have to combat with knaves, enthusiasts, and fools, is neither pleasing nor profitable in any point of view: yet they, who, in discharging the sacred obligations of public duty, are forced into such conflicts, must submit to the humiliation. They would themselves be criminal in the next degree, were they to consult their own personal feelings: they are bound to consider only their own particular duty.

I have said, that on opening my political campaign, I had to measure my strength with that of Cobbett. And who is he? William Cobbett, formerly a serjeant in the 54th regiment of Foot, which

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he quitted; who for the last fifteen or sixteen years has been a furious public writer, at one time deriving an enormous income from the simplicity of his readers; who has been, with unexampled versatility and licentiousness, all things to all men; who has flattered and abused, praised and reprobated, encouraged and deified all parties, just as his interest has happened to guide his venal pen; and who had been sentenced to a two year's confinement in Newgate, for a scandalous and malicious libel on the military reputation of his country—such was the leading writer of the faction that was aiming to subvert the British constitution; such was the man who would have persuaded us that in his mind and heart was resident all that is enlightened as to intellect, energetic as to action, and pure and patriotic as to motive. What was done by others was degraded by the basest corruption, the most sordid selfishness, and the most contemptible incapa-

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city. What his party aimed at, was recommended by the most correct and comprehensive understanding, and sanctified by an unblemished integrity of heart. This is the just, the amiable, the candid, the modest representation which William Cobbett exhibits of himself and friends; and with people who read what is given to them, and who believe all they read; who take an assertion on credit rather than encounter the trouble of investigation; or who are base enough to be gratified with every accusation that is levelled at the dignity of our nature, it is a representation which is sure to gain proselytes.

Convinced of his capacity, from the reasons I have stated, to gain over the profligate, the idle, and the credulous, the friends of tumult and insurrection, the lovers and promoters of mischief, I attacked him in his strong hold, and set him up weekly in such points of view as frequently made him detected and often

despised. "What!" said I, in one of my numbers, "is it to be supposed that such a miserable character can engage in triumphant warfare against the laws, the property, the virtue, the talents, the peaceful industry, the social happiness, the sober judgment, the steady patriotism, the unshaken loyalty of this great, and happy, and flourishing country? Is its glory to be effaced, and its government destroyed, by the efforts of a wild fanatic, or traitorous vagabond, or infuriated incendiary, who, whilst he sets up his own despicable and depraved vices, as objects of idolatry, is striving to decry all that is venerable or respectable, and to abolish all that is useful or beneficial? Are we bound to deliver up our faith to an obscure and worthless individual, who has the impudence to assure us that none have ability and honesty but himself and his patrons, and that the rest of mankind are pitiful drivellers or corrupt knaves?"

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In this manner I continued to expose and strike my opponent so effectually, that his Register began to fall with the same rapidity as mine rose in the esteem of the public. Not content with lashing his principles, I criticised his style, and the nature and character of his compositions. When his Register originally appeared, I observed that it was only remarkable for colloquial barbarisms, licentious idioms, irregular combinations, and perverted taste. From this state of literary ignominy, it advanced to a certain degree of negative fame; it amused the vulgar, and animated the torpid, and contributed more to the stream of jocularity than of vice. Ambitious of a superior merit, and willing to grasp a storm instead of enjoying a calm, its conductor abandoned the assembly of the festive, and joined those screech-owls, whose only care is to crush the rising hope, to damp the patriotic transport, and to allay the golden hours of their countrymen

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with the hateful dross of suspicion against the king and the public servants of the throne.

Where disaffection begins, merit terminates. No sooner did Cobbett sell himself to the opposition, than his comic colloquials and vulgar felicities yielded to low stratagems, nimble shifts, and sly concealments. From these, and from his associations, he had contracted that intellectual famine which urged him to assassinate royalty, and to gratify its morose and distempered cravings on every victim he had the capacity to run down. "Away then," continued I, "with his brilliant claims, which are built upon a foundation of sand! As for his popularity as a writer, separated from the favour of the mob, which every author can obtain, who will condescend to supply delusions to their ignorance, and gratifications to their vices, it amounts to nothing." To these opinions I had in my turn many proselytes. Before the first six months

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volume of the Register in which I wrote was closed, there were thousands who learned from it that William Cobbett was a mere pretender to literature; that he misled the idle by holding out false allurements to their hopes; and excited the turbulent by administering to their most pernicious passions.

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CHAP. V.

Assumes the Signature of Albion.—Abandons the Register for the Phœnix.—Learns that Mr. Perceval means to give him a Pension.—Loses it by his premature Apostacy.—Curses his evil Destiny.

Of all the circumstances that raise emotions, not excepting beauty, nor even greatness, novelty has the most powerful influence. A new object produces instantaneously an emotion termed wonder, which totally occupies the mind, and for a time excludes all other objects. Men tear themselves from their native country in search of things rare and new, and the bulk of mankind delight in strange circumstances and extraordinary events.

To what cause shall we ascribe these singular appearances? To curiosity undoubtedly; a principle implanted in hu-

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man nature for a purpose extremely beneficial, that of acquiring knowledge; and the emotion of wonder, raised by strange objects, inflames our curiosity to know more of these objects. I was so well convinced of the powerful influence both of novelty and curiosity, that in my attack on Cobbett, and the faction of which he was the advocate, I wrote under the signature of "Albion," and, like phosphorus in the dark, scattered my light from the impenetrable recesses of an unknown solitude.

Nothing could possibly have produced a better effect than this. The public became solicitous to know who "Albion" really was; and William Cobbett, enraged to think that his successful adversary was a mere newspaper contributor, fiercely attacked now Mr. Becket, now Mr. Canning, and Mr. Croker, to whom, as Treasury writers, he alternately attributed each of my compositions in Bladgon's Political Register. These adven-

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titious circumstances gave much more than ordinary publicity to this Register, enabling the proprietor to extend his sphere of living, and have the most sumptuous parties at his residence, the Royal Cockpit, in the Bird-cage Walk. I was often of these parties, and am free to confess, that when I contrasted the palace, the pictures, the music, the table, the wine of the luxurious donor, with my humble cottage and contracted revenue of ten pounds per month, barely competent to meet the meanest demands of life, I could not but think there was something wrong in the system which embraced me; and that, as my political disquisitions were unquestionably acknowledged to be the sole and entire support of Mr. Blagdon in a sphere of gilded luxury and uninterrupted ease, it was but natural for me to seek an encreased portion of his emoluments, and admit some little sunshine into my shadowy abode. Consequently, I impor-

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tuned Mr. Blagdon for a larger income, but was always put off with vague promises, and that kind of cant which people employ who have neither spirit to be liberal, nor principle to be just.

From a reverence to the opinion of Ellen H. who continued to honour me with her friendship and advice, I stooped to forbearance, and still sought for that happiness at home, which she said consisted more in a mind "with a little pleased," than in one coveting dignities and riches. Ellen was right. To enjoy happiness we must be guided by moderation and reason. I consulted both, and was for a time satisfied and silent. I remained at home—Ellen and I endeavouring to anticipate our mutual desire, by our reciprocal felicities. Our pleasures, our troubles were the same; because we had, if I may be allowed the expression, but one soul between us. We were animated by the same sentiments, and these sentiments were always generous. It

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would have been thought a crime to have separated us, because we never enjoyed pleasure more than when we shared it between us. In the most advanced age, we anticipated the happiness of loving each other; and this happiness knew no other cloud; no other intermission, but the prospect of that awful moment which should one day separate us for ever.

In this domestic and tranquil manner I went on for some time, my heart honest and my conscience clear; when walking, one day, with my amiable companion along the King's Road, a gentleman in a curricle nearly drove over us. It proved to be—Mr. Blagdon. This sight was more than I had patience to endure, and it disturbed my quiet. Perhaps transported by the enthusiasm of an author for his own compositions, and perhaps elated with the vanity of one that heard himself called the successor of Burke and the conqueror of Cobbett, I

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returned home in a savage and perturbed state, and wrote to Mr. Blagdon, stating, that among the few felicities of my life, I enabled him to drive a curricle and to drink claret, but that I should be compelled to withdraw from his Register if he did not think it proper to double my income from that very day. This evidently alarmed him. Still I only received from him a hollow, flattering answer, requesting me to give him time, and that hereafter he would, most undoubtedly, advance my allowance to the full extent I merited and required.

I was not to be amused by vague propositions any longer. I retired from Mr. Blagdon's Register, and began to seek for an appointment in some paper, conducted by a proprietor of sufficient wealth and discernment to award and encourage me in proportion to the assistance I was allowed so competent to give. The celebrity of the name of "Albion" was considerable, and it was known to

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be said, that "Albion" was Mr. Canning, a politician of the first rank, who could intuitively penetrate deeper than other men into the secrets of the human breast. This was to me a very high compliment, for whenever I see a head formed like his, I am sure to reverence the mind that animates it, as pregnant with wisdom and genius.

Whatever be our pursuits in life, whether we are engaged in the cabinet, or on the 'Change, all is done with the intention of being conducive to our immediate satisfaction, or of eventually contributing more or less to our happiness. Happiness is the great and important object of all our wants and wishes; and different conceptions in what it consists form the reason of its being sought in such a variety of forms.

The reader is not now to be told, that I hunted after happiness with greater perseverance, intrepidity, and zeal, than any other person of the present age; and al-

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though it often eluded my grasp, I never abandoned the chace, or despaired of ultimate success. At first, I had considered the way to the temple of happiness as a journey which would soon be performed, and was, therefore, perplexed to find that, as I advanced, I sometimes lost sight of it from the unevenness of the ground, and though its beauty was often to be seen by a gleam of sun-shine, anon it was obscured by the misty vapours which were floating around.

Having totally lost sight of it at Mr. Blagdon's, in the Bird-cage Walk, Saint James's Park, I turned towards the city, and convinced myself that I had at length succeeded, and that the abode I so anxiously sought for was No. 76, Fleet Street, where a man of the name of Swan conducted a newspaper called the Phœnix, or Weekly Chronicle. In the language of business, Mr. Swan, hearing that I had separated from Blagdon, made me the offer of the editorship of his paper,

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and on these terms, two guineas per week, with half a guinea more for every hundred copies which should be sold after the sale extended to five hundred impressions. I closed with these propositions, and, under the signature of "Sidney," commenced my career in the Phœnix newspaper.

Mr. Blagdon no sooner heard of this coalition than he found me out, and offered me four guineas per week, if I would return to the columns of his Register. I could not accede to this offer. I was irrevocably engaged to Swan. My refusal encreased his anxiety. He made me offer upon offer, and finally confessed to me that, on my menace to leave his paper, in consequence of the poverty of his supplies, he had informed Mr. Perceval who and what "Albion" was, at the same time stating that, as he (Blagdon) was unable to remunerate such a writer as "Albion," he begged ministerial assistance to that effect; observing also,

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that if "Albion," for want of patronage or encouragement, withdrew from his Register, it would undoubtedly fall to the ground, thereby affording Cobbett, and all other enemies to the government, a greater triumph than they could possibly hope for from any other political occurrence or literary event. "But to come to the point," interrupted I, with more irritation than patience, "what have you done? what is the result?"—"Every thing has been done," replied Blagdon, "that man could do, desire, or wish. It is acknowledged that you are not only the main support of my paper, but the chief palladium of the throne itself. I have obtained for you the promise of an allowance of one hundred pounds per quarter, or four hundred pounds a-year; and if you engage to write for my Register after your usual manner, I will go to the Treasury to-morrow by appointment, and get that promise confirmed by Mr. Litchfield and

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Mr. Arbuthnot, whom Mr. Perceval has instructed to treat with me." On saying this, he laid before me several letters, particularly from Mr. B., private secretary to Mr. Perceval, and placed such other evidence before me as left no doubt on my mind that his representation was correct in every point.

It was now evident that I possessed a grand trump in my mind, and that the game was mine if I played my cards with any manner of skill. The misfortune was that a monstrous error had been already committed, and my partner was a man who plunged from one blunder to another; or rather, who in correcting one error committed ten. With the view of repairing his first fault, in suffering me to retire from his columns, he employed a person in my place, whom he thought competent to usurp the name of "Albion," but whom he soon was compelled to treat with indignation and disgust, sending him off to the Courier or

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the Morning Post. Left now without colleague or matter for his paper, and his negociation with Mr. Perceval advanced to the successful degree I have explained, he prevailed on me to write him some numbers under my former signature of "Albion," in such a manner as would convince Mr. Perceval and the public that his Register had all my talents and aid.

The reader will remember that, at the time of these events, I was editor of the Phœnix, a demi-opposition paper, and that my original articles in that paper, signed "Sidney," began to make a noise in the world, to be spoken of, quoted, and copied by several of the London papers, as well as those of the most considerable provincial towns. Hence, at the same time, and by an arbitrary compulsion, I was the "Sidney" of the "Phœnix," and the "Albion" of the "Register," on the eve of Mr. Blagdon's receiving the award of my past and ex-

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pected services in favour of the state. To be the better assured of his going to the Treasury, I accompanied him to the door. My eyes followed him as he ascended the steps. When he arrived at the top, he turned towards the place where I was standing: neither of us then entertained the least suspicion that our evil genius hovered over Downing Street, and directed our destiny. It was nevertheless so. As Blagdon joined me in the street, he had the appearance of one blasted by lightning. On entering the cabinet, he was told abruptly that Mr. Perceval had ascertained the "Sidney" of the Phœnix to be the "Albion" of the Register, and that he had made up his mind never more to hold any intercourse with writers who were so depraved as to advocate opposite principles, and compromise honour for bread.

This short interview made so strong an impression on Blagdon's mind, that he left me with the determination of hanging

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himself in the Bird-cage Walk towards the fall of night. Without waiting to turn him from this stupid design, I returned to my study with an encreased attachment to social life, my nervous sensibility awakened, and the sphere of my political ideas considerably enlarged. I took up the pen of "Sidney" with the stimulant of resentment, and resolved not to lay it down till it constituted for me an ample fortune, or reduced the arrogance of the minister to a level with my own terms.

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CHAP. VI.

He weakens the Power of Mr. Perceval's Government.—He evinces a deep Knowledge of all the public Men and Measures of the Times.—A Cause occurs, which makes him leave London in disgust.

MEN, as I have said on a former occasion, are very often hurried on by the violence of their passions, without seeing their ends, or suffering themselves to take a view of the landing-place to which they tend; and reason, that eternal volunteer in the service of the passions, only serves to find pretences and excuses to justify the inclinations.

The parliament, who attacked King Charles the First, never suspected they were rushing into anarchy; they felt the grievance of government; by little and little they eased themselves of the burden; they grasped at power; every ad-

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vance they made towards freedom only made the remainder of subjection intolerable to them; but the instant they acquired the full possession of liberty, the tyranny of Cromwell became necessary to save them from cutting each others throats.

Montesquieu observes, that factions and contention are essential to free states. He saw plainly the fact, but was not quite so well apprised of the cause; for nothing can be a clearer evidence that the freedom men desire cannot be reconciled with any permanency to the human state, than that in all societies, which adopt the principles of liberty, there is a perpetual ferment and strife, until those principles be ejected out of the constitution. The ostracism of the Athenians, and the proscription of the Romans, demonstrate the natural infirmity of their governments, and the want of a sufficient ruling power. Popular states are generally past remedy before the de-

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cay is suspected. As their final end approaches, factions bring on a continual fever, tending to destroy a frame that cannot be preserved; and then another form of government, which is always despotic, succeeds.

Nothing is more obvious than that the government of Rome was vitally destroyed, some years before Cæsar won the decisive battle of Pharsalia. It was not his ambition that ruined the commonwealth, but the fall of the commonwealth, which that vigilant politician saw to be inevitable, incited his ambition. The prerogatives of the ruling powers were at this time wholly exhausted; yet were the Romans at no other age so universally mad for liberty; by the encouragement of which spirit that great statesman brought the republic to its final ruin.

There is a truth necessary to be taken notice of, which Addison, in his Cato, has concealed with great care; it is, that Cato was the tory and caviller of his

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time, who stood up for prerogative; and that Cæsar, while he was planning the destruction of the republic, was the whig and patron of liberty, who took every opportunity to extend the privileges of the people, in order to heighten the disorder that was then too far gone. Pompey, who was before Cæsar the patron of the people, took exactly the same method, for the same reason; and from the event we may infer, that there are no limits to the desire of freedom short of the destruction of government; and that there is no stage of government, in which men are more impatient for new degrees of liberty, than when the commonwealth is upon the point of dissolution, for want of sufficient authority.

What I have said of antient states, of men, and measures, is exactly applicable to the state, men, and measures of Great Britain, at the time I took the conduct of the Phœnix newspaper, and aban-

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doned the Register of Mr. Blagdon. It was a period torn by faction, and pregnant with danger, and when the mischievous were in hopes that they could dissolve the government, because they suspected they had intimidated and weakened its rulers. At such a period it was to be expected, that the little Pompeys and Cæsars, who led the factions of England, should rejoice at the silence of "Albion" in the Register, and at the accession of "Sidney" to the Phœnix, which had been originally, or before my time, more corrupt and venal than the Morning Post, or Evening Courier. A greater proof cannot be given of the cause and effect of this exultation, than that the rise of the Phœnix in the short space of six weeks was greater than any paper ever before experienced within the same period, and the fall of the Register was so rapid, that before two months had elapsed, from my secession, it was consigned to the tomb of the Capulets, and

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its proprietor was committed to the care of the marshal of the King's Bench.

Never did the factious bestow higher praises upon any writer than they did upon me. Perry of the Morning Chronicle, the most hardened democrat that ever lived, in copying one of my papers signed Sidney, speaks in these words:— "Like Junius, his popular talents introduce him to a wide field of composition. Instead of the dry erudition and dull reasoning, contained in the tame, phlegmatic columns of the ministerial papers, "Sidney" enters into the superior province of argumentation, and of vehement, though not embellished declamation. Confident, daring, and rapid, he despises the more polished, classic language of Junius; and though less academic than that distinguished writer, he forcibly impresses his opinions, especially on minds incapable of following the eagle flights of more ardent or accomplished writers. Indeed, his strong, though often uncouth

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metaphors, his frequent mutilated periods, hasty digressions, and forcible repetitions, would not so well adorn the page as the highly finished performances of Junius; but their effect on the reader is great, and is, of course, strongly conducive to his successful influence. His writing has, perhaps, no model. Clearness and energy are the characteristics to which he lays claim. Nothing can be clearer than his definitions. He fixes the state of the question, and the point he means to combat. His writings are not skirted with that brilliancy of imagination, that rich copiousness so pre-eminently distinguished by Junius; but their force and perspicuity give them a powerful effect. He never fatigues the mind, or tires his readers. When it is his business to announce and impress truth, to discover fraud, to screen innocence, or protect integrity, he is equal to the task of combating and unveiling insidious sophistry,

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refuting objections, topping off the luxuriances that darken a subject, stripping a question of the accessions that impede its progress, and forcing the uncandid antagonist to bend to the unclouded radiancy of truth. He never pours out a deluge of words, without stating what is conclusive, and coming to the point. He is also the truest limner of character of the present age."

I have made this long quotation, not from vanity, but merely to shew how formidable I became to the minister, and that, if he did not recal his late resolution respecting me, I had the power to weaken the whole fabric of his government, and render my Phœnix the precursor of his destruction.

Men of great talents, who improve and adorn society, can never be too highly esteemed, nor too conspicuously distinguished; and cold and callous must that heart be, which can contemplate such

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illustrious virtues without emotion, and without feeling a generous ambition kindle in the breast to imitate, and even to excel them.

But men of presumed talents, who injure and disturb society, can never be too highly detested, nor too conspicuously exposed. These reflections burst upon my mind while in the full meridian of my political glory. In the midst of all the plaudits I received from the whigs, I lamented that I ever ceased to keep alive and disseminate that flame of loyalty which I once cherished, and which the overweening violence of the whigs had, with my assistance, nearly extinguished. I now remembered the attack I made upon Cobbett, which to this hour makes that writer tremble; an attack, breathing the true sentiments of loyalty, with all the energy of virtue, and all the attraction to be acquired from the force of eloquence, with which I expressed my indignant feelings.

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While the state was struggling with difficulties, that tended greatly to impede and affect its exertions, I, while a loyal writer, gave a new colour to the national complexion; banished gloom and despair, and exhibited the kingdom in a wealthy and prosperous condition almost beyond example. "Every wind that blows," said I, in one of my "Albion" numbers, "wafts an influx of riches into our ports. The seas are covered with our ships, laden with the produce of every clime, of which our extensive colonies, and the confidence that is exclusively due to our commercial character, secure us the consignment; and with the productions of our arts and industry, which their superior and unrivalled excellence induce the world to covet." In this manner, and by constantly urging the people to adhere to the crown and constitution, did I distinguish myself; and when Mr. Perceval saw it proper to settle on me four hundred pounds a-year, it is to be presumed

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that his existence as a minister, and his triumph over treason, were, perhaps, in some degree, owing to the advantages which he received from what was universally called "Albion's popular and powerful support."

But no sooner had I an altercation with Mr. Perceval, than I felt myself at liberty to contemplate the condition of the country in another point of view. Like Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Whitbread, Lord Folkstone, &c. &c. I shuddered. Distress of every description burst upon my presence.—The liberty of the subject destroyed by the inroads of power—the property of the country swallowed up by war! How was I to avert this general wreck?—how could I stifle my feelings, my sensibility as a British subject? After a national bankruptcy, which I plainly foresaw, where were the wretched and indigent to find pity and relief? Where were those to look for assistance who would

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be reduced by such means from a state of ease and plenty to penury and want? The anticipation of such disasters, and a conviction that His Majesty's servants were attacking our liberties in the most vital parts; that they were tearing away the very heart-strings of the constitution, and making those men the instruments of our destruction, whom the laws appointed as the immediate guardians of our rights and liberties, made me dread the ruin of civilized society, and enter into an active opposition against an administration to whose measures I attributed the groans and calamities of my countrymen.

In this opposition my career was marked with singular terror, apprehension, and admiration. To expose delinquency, to prevent the consequences of official ambition, I steadily pursued a regular step, and kept repeating my blows on that hydra of corruption, the ministry,

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which I saw swallowing up all the scanty remains of the ancient liberties of the land.

It is but common justice to myself, however, to observe that this picture of political profligacy is as strong a likeness of every public writer in London, as it is of him for whom it was more particularly drawn. There is not a newspaper editor who would not change his principles to increase his means, nor any author who could not be employed in scourging and curbing the administration, or in exposing the opposition as the vilest characters that ever took rank in the society of man. There are even persons, whose right hand is occupied in supporting the throne, and whose left is engaged in aiming a blow at the very key-stone on which it rests. In point of fact, political writers have the principles of men of the law; they advocate any party, any man, any measure for which they are paid; and I now venture

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to predict, that when George Manners is disgusted with Lord Sidmouth, he will gladly take the brief of Samuel Whitbread, and barter the Satirist for the Scourge. I have said this much by way of securing the negative merit of not being considered the worst literary character on the town. But what may prove this somewhat more amply is, that while writing for the Phœnix, seeing my writings read with an eagerness unparalleled since the days of Junius, and finding my income raised, by this public appetite, to five guineas per week, I, notwithstanding, abruptly abandoned it, and left London for Brighton, with no greater sum than fifty pounds at my command. The cause was this: Mr. Swan, the proprietor of the Phœnix, was first intimidated, and next bribed by Mr. Perceval. He called upon me, and told me I MUST qualify my language, to sooth the minister whose vengeance I had incurred, or I could

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no longer be employed by him. The only reply I made to this insolent observation was, by turning him out of my study, and charging him never more to come within the length of my cane.

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CHAP. VII.

Settles in a small Cottage at Brighton.—Gives the secret History of "The Book."—Menaces Mr. Perceval.—Sits down to Write "The Spirit of the Book."—Predicts that it will bring the Apostate Lawyer to a terrible and premature Fate.

THE human passions lie in some degree concealed behind forms and artificial manners; and the powers of the soul, without an opportunity of exerting them virtuously, lose their vigour. An unsettled state, with those difficulties that attend it, is the proper field for an exalted character, and the exertion of great parts. Merit there rises always superior. No fortuitous event can raise the timid and mean into power.

Without arrogating to myself the title of exalted character, or the possession of great parts, I may still be allowed to say, that I never felt more power of soul and

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vigour of mind than I experienced on finding myself equally remote from the drudgery of the opposition, and the venality of the ministerial press. Weary of that bustle of politics, business, and dissipation, which pervade the town; weary of its appearances of art, excluding the unviolated charms of nature; weary of its incessant collisions of human interests, pretensions, humours, follies, and crimes, I gladly withdrew, to breathe the pure untainted breezes which blow over the fields; to mark where the vegetable energies of nature predominate over intermeddling science; to muse in solitude into which the din of society could scarcely penetrate; and, if possible, to recover a relish for all that is pleasing in human converse, by forgetting those political occurrences and other annoyances, which I so severely felt amid too long a delay in the more crowded scenes of life. As I hastened from London, I regarded it with all the disgust due to a place of mi-

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serable confinement. I shrunk with dislike from it, as though it were some interminable sandy waste, or some desolate isle, marked with no vestiges of the divine beneficence; and I proceeded to Brighton as to a paradise, where there was no temptation to be misled, and where the exigencies to be experienced were more of a nature to rouse and stimulate, than to brutalize and embarrass the mind.

Scarcely, however, had I settled in a small cottage situated on the North Steine of Brighton, before I saw the propriety of exerting such talents as I possessed, and turning them to the purposes of my comfort and felicity. In the choice of my subject I had no difficulty. Mr. Perceval was the cause of my having lost the editorship of the Phœnix, and I from that moment resolved that the author of my misfortune should be the origin of my prosperity. Mr. Perceval was much in my power: but I must here, though contrary to my taste, and foreign to my

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practice, enter into some prolix explanations. At the time I wrote under the signature of "Albion," and was what was technically called "a loyal writer," I was condemned to know every venal publisher, such as George Manners, Stewart, and all that miserable tribe, whose souls and bodies have been long sold to the minions of power. The most respectable of these was Mr. Lindsell of Wimpole Street, from whom I learned that he was employed by Mr. Perceval to print two thousand copies of a certain work, entitled, "The Delicate Investigation," but on no account to publish or sell a single copy till he had further instructions from his employer. This information was not cast away upon me. I discovered the printer, Mr. Edwards, the celebrated author of the Diamond Testament, and I obtained from one of his compositors a sight of the rough sheets in succession as they were printed off. At the conclusion of the printing,

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however, seals were set upon Mr. Edwards's office, the workmen were sworn to the number of copies printed, and the whole of the immense edition, with the exception of six copies withdrawn by Mr. Perceval, and six more purloined by the persons employed on the press, was committed to the flames. This conflagration was by order, and in the presence of Mr. Perceval, the proprietor, compiler, and editor of the work ! ! !

I have said that this information was not cast away upon me; but it was not till I had abandoned the interests of Mr. Perceval, and ceased to advocate the measures of administration, that I found an occasion of turning it to my advantage, and making the author of my fall the footstool of my elevation. The Phœnix, which I conducted, was the instrument I employed. In a number of that paper, published August the fifth, 1810, I inserted the following notice: "The Book." "At a moment of dark mystery and bold

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imposition, a plan was formed for the absolute ruin and destruction of her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales. A council presumed to be called together for the glory of the crown and the good of the nation, summoned this amiable personage, interrogated her and all her domestics, and delivered their proceedings and decisions into the hands of the King. The Book, however, was compiled and printed by Mr. Perceval, her Royal Highness's attorney. He printed two thousand copies, but published no more than six. These six he delivered into the hands of the leading members of the Royal family: the remainder he held conditionally sealed up. The proceedings were no sooner seen IN PRINT by this illustrious family than they were filled with horror, remorse, and dismay. The Princess was innocent, the accuser criminal! Nothing could now be thought of but how to convert rage into friendship, or how to destroy every trace of a trans-

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action which Mr. Perceval, in his printed proceedings, made appear to be the most bloody and treacherous that history has upon record.

"To bury the proceedings of Council was the first suggestion; but it was adopted too late. "The Book" was printed. In this dilemma Mr. Perceval was consulted. He admitted that "The Book" was printed, but denied that it was published. It was yet in his power to secure the reputation of the accusers. He could propose a scheme capable of producing this important consequence. Were he to be suddenly raised to the station of prime minister, to the chancellorship of the Exchequer, and to be secured two of the richest sinecures in the kingdom, he would suppress his printed edition of the proceedings in council against his Royal client, and bury the whole transaction in so deep an oblivion, that it could never more rise to appearance and to light. This scheme was adopted: Mr

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Perceval was forming a cabinet, while Mr. Lindsell was setting fire to the two thousand copies of the Delicate Investigation, now vulgarly called "The Book."

"To this universal conflagration there were some few exceptions: six rough copies had been purloined, and gone abroad. To correct this lamentable error, Mr. Perceval applied to the Chancellor to send injunctions to the holders not to dare to publish them, and to discover the holders, rewards were offered for the extant copies, to a very large amount.—Such being the case, and the importance of "The Book," the Editor of the Phœnix, who has access to one of the extant copies, is determined to give extracts from it in this paper, and to investigate the spirit and principles of the proceeding in such a manner as must eventually bring the whole question before the public eye."

Immediately after the publication of this notice, an injunction was sent into

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the Phœnix office not to print the extracts alluded to, and Mr. Swan, the proprietor, was first menaced, and then debauched to change the principles of his paper, or to abandon me to my usual evil destiny. He abandoned me, and I retired to Brighton, where I came to the resolution of writing "The Spirit of the Book," and of convincing Mr. Perceval how absurd it was to call himself an upright minister or an honest man, before he had burnt my evidence of his life, and put out the eyes of his judge.

The fabric of a work, intended for general publicity, should in its texture preserve a just medium between excessive complexity and extreme simplicity. In a great multiplicity of events, the interest will be dissipated. In an undue paucity of incidents, it will be impossible to create and maintain that anxious hope, fear and curiosity in the reader, in the excitement to which the interest of such a piece properly consists.

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In my "Spirit of the Book," which I composed during a six weeks residence at Brighton, I was directed by these criticisms. Hence I seized and enchained the attention of the reader, by making the events consist rather of one capital change of fortune, involving many subordinate incidents, than of a succession of such changes connected into a sort of whole. To impose the more powerfully on the imagination, I never appeared as a writer, but wrote in the person and in the name of her Royal Highness; that is, the very heroine of "The Book," and "Spirit of the Book." To convince the reader of the efficacy of this measure, I shall here transcribe the first letter of that work, which is presumed to be from the Royal mother to the illustrious daughter:

CAROLINE TO CHARLOTTE.

"It is with the utmost reluctance, my dear girl, that I review my life. But I

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am forced into the arena, to defend my honour and reputation; having been branded with the grossest suspicions and charges, by my civil and sacerdotal accusers, whose conduct, during the delicate inquiry, evinces that this country is arrived at that state of depravity, which the Romans attained previously to the ruin and dissolution of their empire.

"Indeed, when almost the whole of my accusers directly countenanced a most savage and unnatural inquiry, and with unparalleled effrontery called for an investigation into my conduct, the minutes of which investigation they durst not for their own sakes expose, I think I see their characters accurately drawn by Juvenal; I see that hardened audacity, the last refuge of detected guilt, mentioned by Tacitus in speaking of the infamous Messalina.

"God forbid that I should involve the innocent with the guilty. There are, I

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hope, many of the first description; but, alas! they bear no proportion to the latter—at least, amongst my accusers.—But the Delicate Inquiry; or, "The Book," is suppressed, and you are told that I, your mother, am not to be estimated at any value, since the inquiry was thought necessary to be instituted and pursued. Fatal and unquestionable appears the truth of this assertion! The inquiry has, in truth, made my life teem with misery and with shame. It has deliberately exposed me to censure and contempt. It exhibits me as a wretched outcast from society, who merits the scoffs and the scorns of a merciless world. It has set me adrift upon the tempestuous ocean of my own passions, when they are most irritated and headstrong. It has cut me out from the moorings of those domestic obligations, by whose cable I might ride in safety from their turbulence. It has robbed me of the society of my husband and my daughter. It has deprived me of

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the powerful influence which arises from the sense of home, from the sacred religion of the hearth, in quelling the passions, in reclaiming the wanderings, in correcting the disorders of the human heart.

"Yes! my child, the inquiry has cruelly bereaved me of the protection of these attachments: and it is but too fatally true that I am no longer to be estimated at any value. I am no longer worth any thing: faded, fallen, degraded, and traduced, I am worth less than nothing! But it is for the honour, the hope, the expectation, the tenderness, and the comforts, that have been blasted by the inquiry, and that have fled from me for ever, that I write these memoirs for you, and for posterity. It is not, therefore, my Charlotte, my present value which you are to weigh, but it is my value at that time when I sat basking in a father's and in a mother's love; with the blessing of heaven on my head, and

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its purity in my heart;—when I sat amongst my own princely family, and heard the morality of a parental board. Estimate, my child, that past value; compare it with its present deplorable diminution, in consequence of a political marriage, and of a political investigation; and may it lead you to form some judgment of the severity of the injury inflicted upon me by such a marriage, and the extent of compensation which is due to me by the authors of such an investigation."

In this style, and after these principles, was my "Spirit of the Book" composed throughout, to the extent of three handsome volumes. As its morality was intended to shew that virtue alone is true nobility; and that virtue, with strength of mind, will give a comparative happiness in every condition, however externally wretched, I was justified in setting a higher value upon it than if it were a mere insipid fiction, or a history in the

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hacknied track of familiar life. I also valued it from this prediction, that it would bring the attorney, who abandoned his client, to end the career of his vices and ambition in a death at once shameful, terrible, and premature.

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CHAP. VIII.

He exhibits the Fruit of his Labours.—It is despised by the Booksellers.—Instead of a Purchaser, he meets with a Creditor, who imprisons him.—From the Poultry Compter he is dragged to the Mansion-House.—The Legal Vultures contemplate him with delight.—He is remanded by Alderman Scholey till riper for his Fate.

MANY of the casts and qualities of the human character have been so frequently described, and are so obviously subject every where to common observation, that they can no longer have power to interest in a drama, an epic poem, a novel, nor even in the faithful narrative of true history.

This was the first and universal objection which was cast upon my Spirit of "The Book," on my arrival in London. It was in vain I told the booksellers that my characters were no ordinary ones,

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but on the contrary, that they were such as deeply to fix the attention, to engage the kindness, or to awaken the sympathetic curiosity of the reader. It was in vain I told them, that though the narrative was simple, thesubject was highly political and mysterious, yet that it delicately preserved the truth of nature, and exhibited a few leading characters in a varying uncertainty, till the narrative came to as singular as unexpected a conclusion.

It was in vain that I entered into the genius and character of the work, or into the powerful and political motives which urged me to write it. The booksellers, very naturally, never so much as hearken to an author. When I began to explain that my book contained the principal documents relative to a certain unfortunate transaction, and that it displayed the secret history of an eventful period, involving a certain family in disgrace and ruin, they appeared to pay me no attention, but occupied themselves in criti-

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cising the title-page, and in making such remarks as were best calculated to humiliate the author, and depreciate the estimation of the work.

I must here confess, that although I never entertained a high opinion of the judgment of the booksellers, their conduct on this occasion was unaccountable, was inexplicable, was stupifying. It was their interest to buy my "Spirit of the Book." Next to "The Book" itself, it was by far the most valuable production of the day. I valued it at two thousand guineas. The booksellers would not give me for it the sum of five pounds! This melancholy fact cast me into a most agonizing dilemma. I was so certain of the sale of my work—the immediate sale, that, on coming up to London, I went to the Northumberland Coffee-House, and ran up a bill, which I had no other means of defraying, than out of the supplies so confidently expected from the sale of the "Spirit of the Book."

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Under a dilemma so mortifying and painful, I wrote to a very old acquaintance, John Hylliar Rock Esquire, of Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, and explained to him the nature of my condition, leaving it to his sensibility and judgment how that condition was to be corrected and ameliorated. I was not mistaken in the opinion I entertained of my old friend. He immediately called upon me, entered into a detail of my circumstances, charged me on no account to throw away my work, and promised to call upon me at ten o'clock the following morning, to remove all my pecuniary difficulties.

Ten o'clock at length arrived, as did eleven, twelve, one, two, three, and four! During all this anxious and heart-rending interval, I never ceased to walk in the narrow passage, which leads to the Northumberland Coffee-House from the Strand; and as the clock struck four, my patience exhausted, and my mind sour, I was accosted by—Mr. Rocke?—

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No, reader! But by the Consul of Saint Michaels, Mr. Read, who freighted my vessel for Corunna, and to whom I was indebted in the sum of eleven hundred pounds or more!—This was a dreadful rencounter. Imprisonment long and inevitable promised to be the consequence. I had evaded shipwreck, fire, and the sword; but how was I now to evade the law? Mr. Read regarded me with a savage joy: yet he knew not how to act, and he durst not speak. Finally, rendered bold by my confusion, he seized me by the arm, and told me exultingly I was his prisoner at last.

"Your prisoner, infamous tyrant!" cried I: "where is your authority?" On saying these few words, I knocked him down, and endeavoured to effect my escape through a passage into Charing Cross, when a peace-officer, attracted by the bustle, stopt my course, and again brought me into the presence and the power of Mr. Read. Resistance was

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now vain. Had I not consented to accompany him in a coach to his attorney's in the city, he could have detained me by force on a charge of assault, till a regular writ was issued against me. I yielded to this argument, and was conducted, in the first instance, to the house of his partner in trade, Mr. Kite, of Angel Court, Throgmorton Street. There was something ominous in the name of this man, and the result justified the features of the omen. Finding that I had no extraneous food to gratify the cravings of his depraved appetite, he resolved to reserve my body, blood, and bones, for his diet, and urged Mr. Read to drop all idea of civil proceedings, and to commit me to the Poultry Compter at once, on a suspicion of fraud in a commercial transaction.

Men of weak minds are exposed to the contagion of cruelty. Mr. Read is a man of weak intellects. He followed this advice, though he must have known

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disappointment would ensue, and dissatisfaction arise. I was committed to the Compter, and thrust into a large hall, which I found brim full of misery.—Here a group was discussing and despising the laws; there, a set of wretches were in a state of actual war. In one corner, confusion and blasphemy prevailed; in another, sighs and groans, arising from evils real and imaginary. With such people I was now fixed. To avoid the connexion, I stood haughty and undaunted in the middle. The timidity of the good, the lamentation of the weak, the exasperation of the wicked;—the misery and the corruption were wide and frightful. My whole occupation was to avoid the tumult of parties, and to preserve myself from the dangerous effects of a contagious intercourse, or a too deep despondency.—The day was a day of terror—the night, of punishment—and both of horror.

The judgment was referred to the morn-

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ing which dawned upon such a night, and such a day. To the court of the Lord Mayor were dragged the innocent and the guilty; the first modestly attesting their integrity, and the second supplicating mercy, or bearding and insulting the magistrate, before whose bar they were placed. I was brought up with this wretched group; but my accusers not appearing, my case was put off to the last, and I had leisure to contemplate the miserable scene. Miserable indeed, and I most miserable! Awake to my sense and dignity, elevated by my birth, and said to be respected by my talents, I was shocked at the wicked fellowship, and never felt so disaffected or dissatisfied as I did at that moment with myself. Heartily did I repent my ambitious schemes, my disposition to be great, without the capacity of power, and my spirit to contest where victory is without triumph, and defeat subject to degradation. While engaged in these

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reflections, my accusers appeared in court.

It generally happens that persons of the meanest talents, destitute of all information and instruction, without judgment, knowledge, or experience to guide them, and acting only under the impulse of what they imagine their own vile interest, are the most dogmatical and presumptuous.

Men of wisdom and virtue, who are interested in the decision of a question, are diffident, and slow to offer an opinion upon it; but the logic of mushroom characters, superior to such kind of restraint, deals in bold groundless assertion, and their eloquence consists in empty exclamation, that invariably rejects all the aid of argument.

In the high courts of justice the accused is tranquil and secure; his case is before men of approved wisdom and virtue: but in the subordinate city and magisterial chambers of justice, he is in-

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timidated and unsafe; he is at the mercy of some ignorant upstart, who addresses him in a turgid composition, dry, uninteresting, often brutal, egoistical, and insipid; who commits the prisoner without half a hearing, in order to shew the extraordinary depth of his penetration, and the uncommon strength of his judgment.

As directors of Billingsgate, Leadenhall-Market, Covent-Garden, and the wine-vaults of Saint Clare, city aldermen and petty magistrates may possess the excellent art of securing good fare for the town, but as judges, panegyric must be silent: the tribunal of justice requires a superior capacity to what they are able, from their education, manners, tastes, and habits, to bestow upon it.

However, it was my hard lot to be arraigned at the bar of the Mansion-House. The Lord Mayor being otherwise employed, his chair was taken by Alderman Scholey. The attorney of my ac-

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cusers preferred various heavy charges against me, talking of my character and pursuits with as much confidence and fluency as if he had followed my steps from my youth, although it was well known that he had never heard of me till that morning, and that he was totally ignorant as to the nature of my disposition, as well as the facts and circumstances of my history and case.

The sole object of this cold-blooded attorney was to extend the power of his clients, to consider me a criminal because I was a prisoner, and to make no difference between a fraudulent swindler, and the innocent unfortunate. In consequence, he used all the manœuvres and knavery of the petty-fogging tribe, to make me the prey of his insatiate rapacity, and to bewilder the understanding of the magistrate by a torrent of intricate and technical barbarism; which, in fact, left the magistrate without a clue to guide him, and drowned the chair of

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justice in an ocean of confusion, perplexity, and doubt.

At length, to the great joy of a yawning hungry court, Alderman Scholey drew out his watch, and demanded of me what I had to say in my defence why he should not commit me to His Majesty's prison of Newgate.—I had faced dangers in too many tremendous forms to be intimidated by a legal vulture, or a city glutton: my reply was deliberate, and to this effect:—"If you would put up your watch, Sir," said I, "and give me time to expatiate on the secret history of that eventful period, in which I became acquainted with my accuser, Mr. Read, it may perhaps extenuate the charges against me, and prove to you that they all arise, not out of a fraudulent, but out of an usual and ordinary commercial event."

I then recapitulated the particulars of my diamond design, from the time of my leaving Pernambuco to my arrival at St.

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Michaels. I exhibited the principal documents relative to that unfortunate transaction. I proved my repugnance to contract a debt with Mr. Read; and that the supply of Sir John Moore's army was a speculation of his own proposal. I dwelt with peculiar emphasis on the fact of my giving him eleven hundred pounds in money, when I could have obtained credit for the whole amount of the cargo; and I concluded by demanding with the confidence of the prophet:—

"I demand of you," said I, "what have I done? Behold, here I am: come on, witness, against me. Whose ox have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed, or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes, and I will restore it to you?" Here I was silent; and had I been guilty of swindling and fraud throughout my life, as my accuser's attorney just said, doubtless numbers would have accused me; for I was without support, or a single

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friend to speak in my favour. A dead silence for more than three minutes ensued: I then commenced again, and concluded my justification. In this conclusion I clearly proved to the satisfaction of all, that had I succeeded in bringing the diamonds to England, which I obtained in the mines of the Brazils, I could not only have discharged every obligation which I lay under, but have remained the richest private character in Europe, after every debt was paid with ten-fold interest.

During this description and this scene, the violence of my emotion almost stifled my voice, and tears streamed down my cheeks. The spectators, too, were moved; but the legal vulture and his rapacious keepers steadily pursued their prey, and told the magistrate, that if he viewed the general transaction in the light of commercial business, still he would have to commit me on a specific charge, which they were prepared to make; namely

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that of fixing the evidence of forgery on the small bill of seventy-five pounds, in favour of Charles Harris, which was uttered by me, and paid to Mr. Read. The magistrate called upon the attorney to substantiate the fact; but he could not. He explained that Mr. Harris was at Coventry, and that he must desire me to be remanded to the Compter, till that gentleman should be sent for to town. Mr. Scholey was all obedience to Mr. Attorney, and I was re-conducted to the lowest turnkey in the vilest prison, where I was left at the mercy of a set of wretches, who, practising their villainy under the sanction of custom or law, sought only to pluck and devour me.

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CHAP. IX.

He pleads his own Cause.—His Accusers abandon the criminal Charge, and commit him as a Debtor to the King's Bench.—Is visited by his Creditors.—Treats them with Contempt.—Libels them in a Poem.—They tremble, and purchase the Libel.

In comparing the doctrine of our religion, with the doctrine of our penal statutes, the difference must strike the mind with abhorrence. The scripture says, "It were better a thousand guilty should escape, than that one innocent person should perish."

Our humane, enlightened lawyers disdain this vulgar theory, and pursue a more generous, noble system, the very reverse of the religious one. They think it wiser, and it agrees better with their liberal ideas of justice and policy, that a thousand innocent should suffer, than

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that one guilty should escape. Such, at least, is their practice.

According to this practice I was called up to the Mansion-House, and remanded to the Poultry Compter, to afford my accusers an opportunity of substantiating their charge, and shedding my blood, whether guilty or innocent. This desperate proceeding continued for ten days, when Mr. Harris was brought into court with the utmost exultation and triumph on the part of my enemies; and my commitment to Newgate was considered so certain, by every individual, save myself, that nothing was heard but murmurs of regret and ejaculations of rejoicing. As for myself, my own heart was so sincerely good, so pure, so guileless, that I feared nothing; and after Mr. Charles Harris, of Coventry, had given his expected important evidence respecting the bill; and after he was asked by me, whether he could declare upon oath that there was no such person existing as a

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Mr. Charles Harris of Pernambuco in South America, where the bill was absolutely drawn and passed to me, the whole transaction fell to the ground; for Mr. Harris of *Coventry* could not swear that there was no Mr. Harris of *Pernambuco*, and, therefore, it appeared that there was not a shadow of right in him or in my accusers to drag me before a criminal court, or to charge me with any act of so stigmatizing a nature. But besides their failure in this respect, it was admitted that no attempt was made to imitate the signature of Mr. Harris of Coventry; and the presumptive evidence went further towards the establishment of my innocence, as it shewed that I had no occasion to utter a bill, knowing it to be forged, for the trifling sum of seventy-five pounds, when the person, to whom I passed it, had taken my own bills for eleven or twelve hundred pounds, and would have given me credit, on my name, for five thousand pounds more.

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Thus, after eleven days and nights' confinement in the worst prison in Europe, and as many examinations for the express purpose of committing me to Newgate, there to stand a trial for my life, I was complimented by Mr. Scholey on the establishment of my innocence, and desired to leave the bar, as he found no cause for my further detention or imprisonment. In reply to this, I told him that I considered the whole of his conduct towards me as illegal, but that I despised his heart, his talents, and his judgment too much to notice it in any other place than in a superior court, where it should be my immediate care to prosecute him and all the parties, who had so basely conspired to rob me of my liberty, with the view of attacking my existence. These few observations, and, perhaps, the manner in which I delivered them, made Mr. Scholey tremble; but not so my accusers. With a smile of haughtiness and malignity they heard the decree in my

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favour; for, anticipating its leniency, they were prepared to inflict upon me an immediate and dreadful punishment. They had taken out a writ against me to the amount of two thousand pounds or more, and had an officer ready to serve it at the moment I was set at liberty, or declared innocent of any fraud in my commercial transaction with Mr. Read.

It was a dark cold night, in January, 1811, when I was removed by habeas corpus into the King's Bench Prison. The door opening, I was thrust down a flight of steps, and there left to shift for myself in a spacious court, or under corridors and passages vaulted and paved with stone. A solemn and awful silence prevailed. The air came in chilling blasts from the turnings and arcades, as if the genius of oppression and tyranny was riding upon its wings. No bursting noise arose to disturb the silence of this tomb of living men. Motionless as a statue, I remained till the blood curdled in my veins,

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and I was compelled to walk up and down to preserve my sinking frame from cold, and divert the secret anguish of my heart.

During this night my sufferings were terrible. I shed such tears as rarely fall from the eyes of man. I rejected all those sweet illusions with which I embellished my early life. I called sensibility and fancy to an account before the tribunal of reason; and I strove to suppress in my breast that voice and enthusiasm, which, for the sake of the felicity of human life, should always have the power to mingle in the actions of mankind.

The first of virtues in our commerce with the world, and the chief in giving pleasure to those with whom we associate, is inviolable sincerity of heart. We can never be too punctual in the most scrupulous tenderness to our moral character in this respect, nor too nicely affected in preserving our integrity.

A man, possessing this amiable virtue,

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is still farther prepared to please, by having in his own mind a perpetual fund of satisfaction and entertainment. He is put to no trouble in concealing thoughts, which it would be disgraceful to avow, and he is not anxious to display virtues, which his daily conversation and his constant looks render visible.

Perhaps no man ever experienced the advantage of this sincerity of heart more than I did on the morning of the terrible night which I passed in the King's Bench. Actuated by it, I went to the gate, and demanded an audience of Mr. Brooshoff, the gentleman to whom was confided the conduct of the prison, and the accommodation of the prisoners. On explaining to him how I had passed the night, and relating with simplicity and frankness the origin and cause of my confinement, who and what I was, &c. he attended to me with the utmost kindness and politeness, and assured me that he would secure for me the enjoyment of every conve-

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nience which such a habitation could be expected to afford. There was not a spark of pride or tyranny in Mr. Broos-hoff's nature. He conversed with me as if I had been at perfect freedom, and assured me that the sufferings I endured on the first night were attributable to the officer who introduced me at too late an hour. Nor did his kindness consist in mere words. Before I parted from him, he gave me an order for an apartment in the body of the jail; and at the expiration of a few days more, he surrendered to me a very elegant and convenient chamber in the "State House," a building in the King's Bench, as airy and as handsome as any in Saint George's Fields.

Oh, what a difference between my situation now and what it was but a few days before! I could now live in peace, and rise into reputation. I was then mixed up and convulsed with the vilest of mankind, and ashamed to have my name mentioned, cited, or known. The

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first use I made of this advantageous change was to form some plan for my subsistence, and for fitting up my apartment in a manner suitable to my disposition and views. While in the Compter, and labouring under a charge affecting my life, I was still sufficiently collected to write a satirical poem on the men and the measures which were acting against me. This poem, which I entitled the "Legal Vulture," required nothing more than a few hours revision. I revised it, and sent a MS. copy, with my compliments, to my accuser's attorney, requesting him to call upon Alderman Scholey, or others of the book trade, and sell it in my behalf for the sum of fifty pounds.

It may seem strange, but I had no doubt of the success of this expedient: nor did I deceive myself. On the day following, the attorney and his client, my creditor and accuser, called upon me at my chambers in the State House. I was prepared for such a visit: I had hired

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furniture, and made as comfortable and respectable an appearance as if I had been in circumstances of the greatest felicity and ease. As the legal vulture and his humane employer entered, it was not difficult to perceive that they were mortified and astonished at the situation in which they found me. So astounded and confounded were they, that they remained for a few moments silent; affording me an opportunity to address them in these few words: "It seems, gentlemen, you find me not at all in the condition in which your wishes represented me to be. You expected to see a feeble oppressed man, bowed to the earth under the pressure of poverty, a soul impatient of longer lingering in the craziness of its fleshy tenement—in a word, nothing more than the ruins to which you presumed you had reduced me. Instead of that, you are admitted into the presence of a man great and haughty as ever he had been; surrounded by every consolation

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and comfort; whose eyes sparkle with the fire of health and vivid intelligence; whose voice is firm and well-toned; in a word, Ashe himself, such as the readers of his "Legal Vulture" would suppose him to be."

At the conclusion of this tirade they recovered from their confusion, and told me they had no desire to immure me in prison for life, and that if I had any remaining diamonds from the Brazil expedition, or any other property to transfer, which would in some degree liquidate the debt, they came to receive my propositions, and to shew that they were not as inveterate against me as I appeared to believe, from the opinions in the MS. which I sent to them for sale. A smile of contempt, which I cast on them, as they related the nature of their errand, with the velocity of the electric fluid conveyed to them my principles and sentiments:— "Yes, gentlemen," said I, perceiving they perfectly understood me, "it is a

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principle with me never to hold any communication with those who attack my life or abridge my liberty. Hasten therefore out of my presence, and expose me not to the temptation of kicking you down stairs, and invading the laws of good-manners and hospitality." My aspect was menacing; my gesticulation ferocious. They betook themselves to flight. By six o'clock the same evening they sent a person to secure the copyright of the "Legal Vulture," and to pay me the fifty pounds, which I demanded for it. This day was a day of triumph; the night, of exultation; and both of immeasurable pleasure to an afflicted and insulted author, such as I was.

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CHAP. X.

Interview with a Printer.—Resumes the Editorship of the Phœnix.—Writes several Works, and throws their Value to the Dogs. Assumes the Pen of Junius.—Again appals the Minister.—Is liberated in a mysterious Manner.

PRUDENCE is a principal ingredient in the composition of that being we stile a gentleman, which is, when well defined and well understood, the highest character in life; as in the real gentleman are included the duties of virtue, the niceties of honour, and the ornaments of sentiment.

A man may be honest, he may be just, he may be virtuous, and yet, with all these valuable qualities, for want of prudence, be regarded as of common mould. I fear the propriety of this opinion is very amply manifested in all the previous part of these memoirs: it remains only to

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shew its application to my subsequent adventures. The success which I met with in the sale of my "Legal Vulture" enabled me to furnish my study in the handsomest manner, and to receive and entertain my friends with as much comfort and affluence as though I had been at full liberty and ease. But fifty pounds, thus employed, could only meet the exigencies of a few days: it was necessary to anticipate want, and to become prudent in time.

Thus circumstanced, I again bent my attention to my "Spirit of the Book," which still remained in my possession and unsold. The reader may remember that it was rejected by nearly all the booksellers in London, and that I was so irritated at their ignorance and contumely, that I was once on the point of casting the whole work into the flames. Notwithstanding, I never ceased to value it under two thousand guineas; and no sooner was I comfortably established in the State

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House, than I sent a circular to the book tribe, stating that I had in my possession an inestimable MS. for sale.

I heard nothing whatever of this circular for several days; not, in fact, till I was left to my last shilling, and the lamp of hope on the point of extinction above my head. In this state of mind, and on the seventh day after the emission of the notice, an elderly gentleman, dressed in black, and apparently of the old school, knocked at my door: he was admitted. On my rising to receive him he gave me his hand with frankness, and said: "You see an old man who has read your travels in America, and political disquisitions, with much pleasure and advantage, and who loves and esteems their author." "It gives me delight," answered I, "whenever I hear that my writings have been of use or amusement to worthy men."

We now sat down by the fire—Mr. Allen, for so he announced himself, in

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my great elbow chair; and I beside him in a common small one. The conversation soon turned upon my "Spirit of the Book." He desired to see it, and I placed it on a table before him. He put on a pair of green spectacles, and began to read with the utmost avidity and attention. Not to interrupt him, I descended to the grand court, leaving instructions with my servant to watch his motions, and to call me whenever Mr. Allen should lay down the manuscript.

To dissipate anxiety I played in several matches of rackets, and had consumed nearly two hours when I was informed that the old gentleman wished to see me. I mounted the stairs with a light heart. I felt assured that Mr. Allen would be a purchaser. He confessed that he admired my works and loved their author. What had I to fear? My evil genius, thought I, has at length ceased to persecute me. I entered my study with this sentiment, and saw—my evil genius di-

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rectly opposed to me. In other words, I saw Allen an entirely changed character; putting up his spectacles, and looking like one that was resolved to have nothing whatever to do with me or my affairs. In fact, he was about to leave the room without the usual testimonies of common civility, when I closed the door, and demanded of him abruptly what demon had taken possession of his old crazy body. Saying this, I seized him by the collar and replaced him in the chair, from which he had just risen with so much insolent impetuosity. "Tell me now, Sir," exclaimed I, "what devil has got hold of you, and why it is that you appear to despise my work, and rush from my presence like a demi-savage or monster bred in the woods?"

This address brought my printer to a sense of decorum and politeness. He apologized for his conduct: he said it was a way with him, when he did not like a work, "to wash his hands of all

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concern of it, and go in pursuit of other business." "That may be," replied I, "but it is a way with me to insist upon decency and propriety in every person I hold any communication with; therefore, before I suffer you to leave my presence, tell me with frankness and civility the cause of your present conduct, and your genuine opinion of my manuscript. I do not want you to buy the work," continued I, "but I want you to act with the information of a scholar, and the manners of a gentleman." —"I repeat it again," interrupted Mr. Allen with considerable emotion, "I love you as the author of the Travels in America, and praise your heart and talents as displayed in your poetical works, but I cannot prudently take you for a guide in my trade. Besides, I shudder at your "Spirit of the Book:" I consider it libellous; and although the language is musical, the philosophy is false, and the morality impure." I here told

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him I was perfectly satisfied, and that he was at full liberty to take his leave whenever he would; for that I required nothing more of any man than common decency and candid truth.—He rose to depart: "But, after all," said he, as if actuated by reflection, "what do you ask for the work, such as it is?" "Two thousand guineas," retorted I.—"Be cool, and reasonable, Captain Ashe," was his answer. "I will run all risks, and give you two hundred and fifty pounds." I paused and hesitated. He took a fifty pound note from his pocket-book, and left it as an earnest for the fulfilment of the agreement on the following day. I took up his money; he took up my manuscript; carried it off before I had prudence to repent; and when he called the next day with the remaining two hundred pounds, it was too late to refuse him the copyright, for the sum he advanced me was already half spent in the discharge of some prison debts. Thus

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did I imprudently cast away a property worth ten thousand pounds, or more, for the trifling consideration of two hundred and fifty. In less than three months he cleared by it seven thousand pounds! And such was the avidity of the public to read it, even twelve months after its publication, that the proprietors of the principal circulating libraries were compelled to keep upwards of sixty copies each, to appease the appetite by which their subscribers were devoured! —To me, the only ulterior advantage was, the high reputation which it afforded to my literary name. For, soon after the publication of the first edition, which was but five weeks from the day I sold the manuscript, it brought me into the most advantageous notoriety; procured me the editorship of my old paper, the Phœnix, and obtained for me such a price for my compositions as was unparalleled in literary annals. During my residence in the King's Bench, which

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did not exceed six months, I composed three distinct works; namely, Political Arguments, in favour of a Parliamentary Reform, which I sold to Walter Honeywood Yate, Esquire, for the sum of three hundred pounds; secondly, The History of the Azores, or Western Islands, which I parted with for two hundred and fifty pounds; and thirdly, a Pamphlet on the state of Ireland, and the catholic question, for which I received one hundred and ten pounds from Sir J. J. W. Jervis. Besides, I had the conduct of the *Phœnix*, which brought me in regularly three guineas per week, and several presents from the proprietor, to no inconsiderable amount. But prudence was no ingredient in my character; and so far from being a gentleman in estimation, I was a vagabond in appearance, and a beggar in fact.

For men, excesses of feeling are misfortunes; for women, deadly snares. They lead the weak to guilt, and even

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the wisest to trouble. Benevolence, charity, pity, all the generous influences of humanity, I supplicate for my offspring; but defend them, heaven, from the dangerous seductions of passion, clothed in the false draperies that sensibility make alluring!

We pray against hardness of heart: it is an evil, and may mine never be so defended from pain; but be it my equal prayer that it may not become so enervated by fictitious feelings, as to be unable to resist temptation! Such, however, were the feelings, by which I was actuated during my stay in the King's Bench. It was there I learned that truth, rectitude, genius, industry, and all the first virtues of man, prompted by sensibility alone, unless reason regulates the movement, hurry more frequently to misery than to comfort. Hence it was, that notwithstanding the large sum of money I received for my works, and my weekly allowance from the Phœnix, I

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was often without the command of a pound note; for I never refused the requests of my indigent fellow prisoners, or turned on my heel from the man who told me he was either neglected or indigent, or destitute of bread.

But the loss of property was not the only calamity which this excess of feeling for the miseries of others caused me to sustain. I had to bear a loss of a much more serious nature—I mean political rectitude and character; for in order to raise funds to satisfy the demands of my wants and sensibilities, I declared war against the administration, and made my Phœnix seek by force what was denied to the ordinary claims of literary merit. In the course of this war I appeared the champion of liberty, flashing lightning upon the face of my adversaries, exposing their vices and their crimes, and gaining immortal honour to myself by GLORIOUS efforts in the cause of long insulted outraged humanity.

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I used language that could not pass unnoticed, nor did it fail to excite a very extraordinary degree of attention. Its operation, however, was very different from the calculations I had made. The proprietors of the Phœnix were again menaced, and again debauched. They suddenly took from me the editorship of that paper, and a Mr. Richard Wilson, on the establishment of the Chancellor, called upon me, and gave me to understand that he believed it to be the intention of the Attorney-General to proceed against me, on the ground of my being a treasonable and libellous writer. In this gloom I remained for some time, when it was dissipated by the effulgent light of humanity. Several distinguished personages, but whose names were never confided to me, associated for the purpose of redeeming me from prison. The small debts they discharged, the great ones they gained time for, and they instructed their agent to present me with a purse of one

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hundred guineas on the day he should escort me beyond the confines of the house of incarceration, or the tomb of living men.

In this sudden, unknown, and magical manner, after panting six months for the enjoyment of liberty, was I restored to the blessing of freedom, while five hundred others pined in anguish and solitude, destitute of similar resources, or dying by inches, forsaken and broken-hearted. On this principle, I fear, criminals are often indulged; innocence and misfortune often punished.

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CHAP. XI.

He takes the road to Bristol.—Is sheltered by his Brother.—Writes the "Liberal Critic."—Details its Destiny.—Hides himself in the Vicinity of Bath. Composes a treasonable Work called "The Claustral Palace."—Disposes of it to an enormous Advantage.—Retires to Irby Cottage.

WHEN virtue in peace, and integrity in freedom, are the characteristics of a man, his actions become interesting, and he should be judged by them, and not by those which distinguished his conduct while under the influence of slavery or the shackles of confinement.

The minds of men in prison contract a narrowness that destroys genius and confounds judgment. Accordingly, I acted in the manner I have described while an inhabitant of the King's Bench, but no sooner had I recovered my liberty

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than I was made to relish, with genuine joy, those innocent pleasures, which the very aspect of rural nature, especially when vegetation unfolds its energies, presents to all. I left London with horror, and viewed my past life with contempt and remorse. I took the road to Bristol, once more to behold my mother, my brothers, and sister, who had never ceased to be dear to my heart. I resolved to go on foot. The idea of a coach conveyed the idea of a prison, and I revolted at it. The season was summer, the weather uncommonly mild and serene.

To a man immerging from prison, there is something in the genial breezes of a summer's morning, rich in pure vital air, pregnant with an electricity, and a heat which make them soft and temperate, wafted with no rough violence, and seeming as it were the divine breath of the spirit of nature—something which is, even without reflection, inexpressively refreshing to the sense. When the light

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of the sun breaks out clear and vivid, though not in its full strength, enlivening and yet but partly illuminating the shades; mingling its lucid whiteness with the other colours of the scene; brightening every other colour on which it falls, and stimulating even the human eye to new quickness of vision, how much, how very much is added to the charm!

Oh! I have stood on such a morning, after my escape from the solitude and gloom of a jail, on a wooded bank, while a murmuring brook passed at a small distance below, next a marshy meadow, and beyond it a moated hill spread out before me to the right; on the left were cultivated fields lightly skirted with wood; and still further to the left, was an antique mansion embosomed in trees. I have stood in such a situation, and have felt a sudden delight, such as if I had been removed at once, not only from prison, but from all the turmoils of this earth; as if sorrow had been for ever effaced

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from my bosom; as if all those cares, on which the sense would soon again intrude, were but the phantoms of an unquiet dream.

With enjoyments and considerations of this nature, my journey to Bristol was one of the most agreeable I ever undertook; and my reception among my friends in that city such as evinced the soundest affection and the most perfect goodness of heart. I found my brother Jonathan in the same situation in which I had left him several years before, except the hollow glory of being created a doctor of divinity, by the university in which he was bred. In other respects he was but a curate, and his hopes of further preferment were as faint as though he had been a dog-boy or a shoe-black. As to the rest, his person was manly, his spirit bold, his eloquence lively and fluent. His sermons were pregnant with acute and subtile argumentation, with much important knowledge, moral, historical, and

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theological, unfolded in a clear, vigorous, and correct style. Though habituated to deep thinking and laborious reading, he was generally cheerful, even to playfulness. There was no pedantry in his manners, or conversation, nor was he ever seen to display his learning with ostentation, or to treat with slight or superciliousness those less informed than himself. He rather sought to make them partakers of what he knew, than to mortify them by a parade of his own superiority. Nor had he any of that miserable fastidiousness about him, which too often disgraces men of the church, and prevents their being amused or interested, at least their choosing to appear so, by common performances and common events.

Although a clergyman, my brother Jonathan has ever been far from that presumptuous conceit which is solicitous about mending others, and that moroseness which feeds its own pride by deal-

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ing out general censure. He cultivated to the utmost that great moral wisdom, by which we are made humane, gentle, and forgiving; thankful for the blessings of life, acquiescent in the afflictions we endure, and submissive to all the dispensations of providence. He detested the gloom of superstition, and the persecuting spirit by which it is so often accompanied. His affection to every part of his family was exemplary and uniform. As a husband, a parent, a master, he was ever kind and indulgent, and in friendship no man could be more inviolably sincere. The deep sense of moral and religious obligation, which was habitual to him, and those benevolent feelings which were so great a happiness to his family and friends, have always had the same powerful influence over his public as his private life. He has an ardent zeal for the prosperity of his country, whose real interests he well understands; and in his clerical conduct he proves himself a warm

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friend to the genuine principles of religious and civil liberty, as well as a firm supporter of every branch of our admirable constitution.

Such a character is the Reverend Doctor Ashe of Bristol. And yet he is but a curate, and has been so for the last five-and-twenty years! He has no hopes of preferment, but I have; for I bequeath him and his interests to two illustrious personages, who delight in the promotion of merit, and who have served hundreds whom they have never seen, but for whom they have deeply felt. In retiring from the world myself, I bequeath this good brother, this deserving man, to His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, and to the Right Honourable Lord Byron. There is no obligation which I should acknowledge with more thankfulness, none that I should more gratefully cherish, than a mark of patronage bestowed on my brother, the Reverend Dr. Ashe of Bristol, and this, from a thorough conviction of

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his value to the church, his importance to literature, and—his friendship for me.

In the arm chair, or under the fig-tree of this much neglected, though good and accomplished character, I passed several happy months: but my fervent mind could not languish in inactivity. During this happy retirement, I continued to prosecute my literary labours with incessant diligence, and composed, in particular, the "Liberal Critic; or, Memoirs of Henry Percy," a work in three volumes, which has nothing that has not directly or indirectly a tendency to serve the best interests of the country; and in it, although the characters are all drawn from real life, I made no sacrifice of principles to personal convenience or safety. In short, it is far superior to my "Spirit of the Book," and vies in interest with my "Travels in America." By my familiarity with foreign literature, as well as the best writings in the ancient and Augustan age, I was enabled to enliven

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and illustrate my deeper and more abstruse speculations, as every page almost of my "Liberal Critic" will abundantly testify. But with all these attainments, and acknowledged merits in this work, it could not find a purchaser among the booksellers. It was too moral, philosophical, critical, personal, polemical, political, or clerical; there was not a publisher in London but had an adjective to apply to its disadvantage, before he had half glanced over the title-page. Crosby and Co. at length ventured to undertake it, and to divide the profits with the proprietor; that is, to print it for the love of God, and at the end of two or three years, give a few pounds by way of alms to the unfortunate writer. But this was not exactly my destiny. I sold the manuscript to a private gentleman in Bristol, for the sum of two hundred pounds, who fell into the hands of Crosby, and, for what I know, has the profits to receive from him to this very hour.

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The greatest injury to me from this transaction was, that it tended to pervert my judgment, and deprave my heart. It convinced me that all moral, philosophical, or useful literature, was either unprofitable or unsaleable, and that no work commanded so large a price, and so immediate a purchaser, as one daring and dangerous, attacking the dignity of the crown, or subverting the prosperity of the state. My brother Jonathan was much too honourable and loyal a man to hearken to calculations of this political nature; therefore, when they commenced to occupy and agitate my mind, I took my leave of him, in spite of all his intreaties to the contrary. I wandered for a time from place to place, unable to find any certain residence, and was at length in great difficulties for the very means of subsistence, having lavished away my two hundred pounds in somewhat less than the course of six weeks.

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In solemn truth, there is nothing more ridiculous than the labours either of avarice or ambition; and for this reason, especially, that those who undergo them, undergo them to no purpose.

If it were as certain that there is no other world, as I take it to be certain there is, he would be the wisest man who made the most of the common comforts of this; while the wretch, who spends his days in cares and misery, that he may die greater or richer than other men, is the silliest fool in the universe.

Such are my sentiments at present; but such were not the sentiments by which I was governed after I had left my brother's house, and wandered about the country till I was reduced to a most deplorable state of poverty. While in this lamentable condition it was, that a spirit of avarice and ambition seized hold upon me. I surveyed the wealth of another man, as if it were my own, being indeed not in possession of it, but possessed by

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it; and I exclaimed with the Roman, "Call me but king to-day, and kill me to-morrow."

While I was ruminating on the means of gratifying these inordinate desires, I was passing over a bleak heathy moor, or down, in the vicinity of Bath, skirting a cultivated and highly ornamented region, of which the level rose to an elevation considerably higher than that of the moor. A thunder-storm had darkened the surrounding scene, as I approached to where the view of the cultivated part of the country would have opened before me. The storm burst, and rain and hail fell for some minutes around me, with a violence as if they had been precipitated from the height of a cataract. While the rain yet continued to fall, though with lessened violence, the clouds were partly cleared away; and I came almost to the extremity of the moor. At once, as if it had been a vision in the air, raised by fairy hands, the ornamented scenery be-

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fore me broke upon my sight. The sky over it was serene; the sun with slanting rays illuminated its surface; it was independently of these advantages a tract rich in uncommon beauty; the foreground to which I was approching remained still comparatively dark. It was like a view of the Elysian fields, taken from Mount Negris. On the side I approached, it terminated in the Vale of Fortnight. As I entered this vale I descried the house of an old acquaintance of my brother Jonathan. Wet, destitute, and delighted with the situation, I called upon this gentleman, whose name was Aldrit, and, in the course of the dinner, to which he had the hospitality to invite me, I proposed to become his inmate for three months, and to pay him at the expiration of that period. Terms were stipulated. I remained under his roof from the first moment I entered it, and commenced those operations which were to

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terminate in making me a great or a wealthy character.

To effect a purpose so improbable and gigantic, I had no treasure but my talents; no instrument but my pen. To such a state of pecuniary decay was I reduced, that Mr. Aldrit had to furnish me with paper, as well as to find me credit for shoes and other ordinary necessaries of civilized life. Thus provided, I sat down, and, in the course of three months, composed a large work in four volumes, entitled, "The Claustral Palace; or, Memoirs of the Family." As I came to the close of the fourth volume, I issued a circular letter, descriptive of the springs and principles on which this work moved; and such was the interest this circular excited, that, before I had revised my manuscript, I received several proposals respecting it, and was visited by several violent characters from London, amongst whom were the noted Sedly, and Admiral

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and Colonel Graves. At length, weary of treaty and competition, I closed with the offer of a Mr. C———, and sold half of my copyright for the sum of seven hundred pounds. Mr. C——— was to print and publish at his cost, and give me half the profits, clear of all demands.

In this manner was my avarice fully gratified, and my ambition on the road to unbounded success; for my plan was, (and I insisted on Mr. C——— acting upon it) to play the Perceval game; that is, to print privately, and to issue but six copies to "The Family," until it should appear whether "The Family" would purchase the whole edition on our terms, and bury their memoirs in the oblivion of the grave. Having thus completed my labours in the Valley of Fortnight, I left it rejoicing, and purchased the lease and furniture of a small cottage, called Irby, one mile from Bath, on the lower road to Bristol. This I call one of the,

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most prudent eras of my life. The improvement of my house and gardens was for many months my favourite employment. I was particularly interested in the construction of aviaries and grottos; and from my garden to the Avon I planted trees in such a manner, that from a seat in my study I could look down through a sloping arcade, and see the sails on the river passing suddenly, and vanishing, as through a perspective glass.

The domestic concerns of this enchanting little villa were left to the conduct of a young person whom I became acquainted with at Swansea, during my peregrinations in Wales, after I had left my brother's, in Bristol, and previously to my fixing at Fortnight House, near Bath. She was an admirable housekeeper, and as beautiful as if Venus had presided over her birth, and the nymphs bathed her in the fountain of the Graces. At this villa, too, thus conducted, I received visits from the most eminent of

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my literary cotemporaries, and was as vain and happy as was Pope, when Swift, Gay, and himself, met at Twickenham, and frequently made an illustrious triumvirate of genius.

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CHAP. XII.

Builds Castles in the Air.—Outwits and over-reaches himself.—Poverty and Distress.—Fixes at Pangbourne, in Berkshire.—Takes the Life of the Countess of —— as the Skeleton of a Novel.

HOWEVER wise a man may be who outwits and over-reaches others, he seems not much to deserve that name who outwits and over-reaches himself. For, however strange it may appear, it is still certain that a man may impose on himself as well as on others, as it is known that an habitual liar will come in time to believe his own lies.

In the same manner did I deceive and make a fool of myself at my little cottage of Irby. Having outwitted Mr. C———, the purchaser of half the copyright of my "Claustral Palace," by representing the magnitude of my ulterior design

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in writing it, I fell into the belief myself that I should in no long time become another Perceval, or at least obtain such a sum of money for the suppression of the printed memoirs of "The Family," as would enable me to ride rough-shod over all my difficulties, purchase a seat in Parliament, and stick to the crown for the rest of my days.

While amused by thus building castles in the air, I was exalted above the mean considerations of caution or economy; and as my seven hundred pounds began to shew signs of a galloping consumption or rapid decay, I hesitated not to obtain credit, and to accept bills made payable at the period that Mr. C——— engaged to furnish me with six printed copies of our grand and immortal work. During this interval I lived in a style becoming such imperial expectations. I kept horses and dogs; gave the best wine that could be procured to my friends, and elevated my housekeeper to the rank of

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amie or *maitresse.* I experienced no difficulty; knew no want. Every cloud vanished before the coming of the wished-for event, and nothing but gay visions danced in the horizon around me.

The time agreed upon to bring out the first edition of the work at length arrived. I rode into Bath, where it was printing by an obscure man of the name of Brown, to secure whose dispatch and secrecy Mr. C——— gave a small interest in his share of the work. On calling at Brown's office, I found it shut up! I called upon C———; I was informed he was gone to London! I enquired for the manuscript, and such part of it as was printed; the reply was: "Here is a note he has left for you." I tore it open, and read these words: "Dear Ashe, the game is up. I am off for America. By this time your "Claustral Palace" is burnt to the ground. Success! G. C."

A stroke of thunder from the heavens had been far more welcome to me, and

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much more reasonably expected than these tremendous and heart-sickening words. The change they effected in my situation was also as rapid and violent as if the operation of a supreme agency or power. From the highest summit of ambition I was at once hurled down into the lowest abyss of despair. In less than three days my bills became due; my villa and furniture were no longer mine; my creditors seized on all. There remained to me nothing of all my splendid possessions but a favourite horse and dog. With these I took a circuitous road to London, not a little alarmed at the idea of being pursued; for to add to the embarrassments of many unsettled demands, the parish officers had discovered that my Welsh protégée was far advanced in pregnancy, and that by me.

Thus, after having been gibbetted upon the mount of ambition, was I condemned to wallow in the mire of poverty and distress. Thus too did I outwit myself, at

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a time when I presumed no person in existence could over-reach me, and fancied that I myself was acting with the highest degree of worldly cunning. I must confess, however, that as I wandered along the road, I had so much remaining good sense as to acknowledge that I merited my fall, in as much as the means I employed, whereby to rise, were marked by political profligacy, which fools might indeed admire and follow, but which every honest man must abhor and condemn. For, could there be a greater degree of profligacy than to be loyal in principle, and treasonable in practice? I say loyal in principle; because, if I were not so, I certainly should not be a British subject; I should not merit to belong to a people, who can boast that, in times like those I alluded to, we possessed such an excellent sovereign; a man who, amidst all the corruptions and wickedness of the age in which he lives, had preserved the religious purity of his own

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manners, and who existed as an example to all his subjects. Loyalty is but the just respect that is due to all his virtues. If there be one thing for which the reign of this beloved sovereign will be hereafter distinguished more than another, it is for the moral and religious example which the person and the family of the sovereign (that part of it at least which is under his immediate eye and controul) holds out to his people. The venerable monarch lived under the persuasion that the happiness of his people could only be secured on the basis of their religion and morality, and he exhibited that example in his own person which he wished to be followed by his subjects.

In the reign of George the Third, corruption and profligacy had ceased to be the characteristics of courts; and there are examples of as pure and perfect conduct in the upper ranks of life as in the chosen seat of morality—the middle station. Where, for example, can we find

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the domestic virtues in greater brilliancy than in the royal household? Who would wish in his own family more domestic peace and concord, than that which bound every part of the royal family to their parent and to each other? Hence it is the curse of the treasonable to reverence the object they strike. Among the opposition writers of England, there is not one who does not respect the good old king, but, like me, when composing the Memoirs of "The Family," they are infuriated: his benevolence they consider as weakness; his kindness they attribute to fear. Beware of such writers, Englishmen! Their object is plunder; their intention to vilify and destroy. I know the men!

The passions, which agitate the breast of the visionary, are of too turbulent a kind for him ever to experience any thing like a continued happiness. An attempt to fathom a bottomless pit would not be more absurd, than it would be to

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set bounds to his wishes; for if all his dreams were realized, anxiety would still be rankling in his mind, from the apprehension that there was still something more left to excite his illusions, or gratify his desires.

While the ideas, which were occasioned by the consideration of my late disappointments and reverses of fortune, were impressed on my mind, I insensibly lost all disposition to build castles in the air; yet the active principle was not dormant. "True happiness," said I, in my waking moments, "is little dependant on extrinsic circumstances. The attendant on riches, which, at a distance, has to some minds the same appearance, will, perhaps, on a nearer view, prove only ease, or a relaxation from the toil which poverty renders indispensable."

Indeed, a virtuous man, who can be grateful in prosperity without being elated, and resigned in adversity without being depressed, like a temperate climate,

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which neither feels the sultry heat of the torrid nor the chilling frost of the frigid zone, has the best title to true happiness, and will experience it in the highest degree that human nature admits. Such a man will enjoy prosperity with a double relish, and will not feel adversity with its full force.

In conformity with these reflections, I formed an entirely new plan for the government of my future life. I resolved to live in some little rural village, on the most moderate and economical scale, and to give my labour to that species of literature only which secures a certain degree of success, but lies equally remote from the mount of ambition and the path of shame.

With these maxims and views I continued my journey from Bath, by the way of Oxford to London, in a careless giddy manner, till I arrived at Pangbourne, in Berkshire, which at once presented every object dear to a man escap-

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ing from oppression, and anxious to cast himself into the bosom of peace, security, and literary ease. I immediately settled in this lovely village, and soon enjoyed the placid serene composure of those who are led by virtue from out of the haunts of vice. I felt content—I thought myself secure. There was no difficulty to make me stumble, or to cast me down. My path was neither rugged nor crooked. I had sufficient funds to maintain me till I should have some work prepared for the press, and I had my horse, my dog, and my gun, which I could have recourse to when my toil required to be corrected by exercise, or rural pursuits.

In this happy state there was but one question for me to solve. What book should I write?—I finally determined on a novel—not such a novel, however, as a raw girl with little knowledge of books, and still less of life, could write, but such as a man with the most mature, the

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most cultivated, and the happiest genius, might contemplate with delight, and read with improvement and care. To produce so proud and desirable an effect, I determined that the events of my work should be neither such as happen every day, and are quite familiar to the recollection of all intelligent persons, nor yet such as are not exemplified above once in an age, and then by a concurrence of events scarce within the bounds of credibility. It was also my intention to begin with specifying to myself some grand moral principle which my fiction should illustrate; because this would insensibly lead me to a recollection of those incidents and characters within the range of my reading and observation, which might be the most easily combined for the end I had in view. This is, as it were, a secret to facilitate invention.

Having seen much of human life, and read much in the writings of former novelists of the epic and dramatic poets, of

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the authors of personal memoirs, and the lighter and more amusing historians, the invention of the fable of a novel could not, for any length of time, remain as a stumbling block in my way, or be considered as a task not easily to be performed. There is no doubt that my imagination would have produced a florid fiction, and without the machinery of ghost agency, had not an event of the day given me a subject by far superior to the workings of my own mind, had it even been formed in the romantic school of a Burney, a Radcliffe, or a Weber. In this passing event of the day, there were two illustrious characters; the hero, a Lord, whose disposition, naturally licentious and tyrannical, was confirmed in every evil bias by a bad education; and so great an ignorance between right and wrong, that he had no concern for the joys or sufferings of others, but pursued every scene of life with a view only to his own wicked and selfish gratifications. The heroine, once like a sprig of

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mignionette in June, sweet, fresh, and delicate, bending to the murmur of every passing breeze, and coquetting with every bee and every butterfly that fluttered in her train, was seduced by this noble Lord, married, re-married, and had a double progeny, whose legitimacy she supported by solemn oaths. The scene was an antique castle in G———, whose walls were marked with the blood of priests, princes, and kings; and the catastrophe was such as Ariosto would have acknowledged honourable to the imagination of the Florentine muse. Having thus determined on my fable and machinery, I imposed it as a duty on myself to draw a faithful picture of all the transactions in the life of the Earl of ———, and to compose my work, in all other respects, so as to efface every blot from my moral character, and add new lustre to my literary name.

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CHAP. XIII.

Introduces himself to the Countess of ———. Obtains her full Concurrence and Assistance.—Considers her in the light of an Angel of Innocence.—The Countess repents her Intimacy.—Her Treatment of the Author on the Completion of his Work, called the "Persecuted Peeress."

THERE is no duty more binding and obligatory on a public writer, than labouring to impress the minds of his readers with a veneration for truth, and a respect for this great and incontrovertible maxim;—that unless we cherish all the finer feelings of the heart, and do away all that tends to render those callous, we can neither expect to enjoy happiness ourselves, nor effectually contribute to that of our fellow-creatures.

As I acknowledged the weight of this maxim before I commenced my intended

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work, I was induced to determine on two distinct measures; to seek for truth at the fountain head, and to make sensibility and justice pervade every page. Thus determined, I wrote a letter to the Countess of ———, informing her of my intention, and requesting her to furnish me with such facts and anecdotes as might tend to illustrate her history, and efface, if possible, those calumnies, and that charge of perjury which blotted her character, since the rejection of credit to her oath by a great majority of the House of Lords.

In answer to this letter, Lady ——— stated that it was indeed true, she did possess the facts and documents I solicited, but that it was not her desire to publish them during the life of the parties; that she preferred to be judged and esteemed by posterity, &c. &c. The negative of this letter was not strong enough to turn me from my purpose. Besides, it is known that the woman

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who reasons is lost. I wrote again; and I sent a written pledge, which I obtained from my brother Jonathan, that the work should be executed in a manner to do her honour, and in the style of the "Spirit of the Book."

This second attempt had all the desired effect.—The answer was an invitation to C—— Lodge, between Windsor and London. I ordered my horse, and was announced to her Ladyship by twelve o'clock on the day after I was honoured with permission to attend upon her. She received me with the utmost kindness, and scrupled not, after the first ceremonies of introduction were passed, to pour out the genuine effusions of her heart, and to thank me for my intentions, in terms the most flattering to my feelings. I was so enamoured of her inviting person, her lively and intellectual conversation, and the brilliancy of her manners, that I became entirely devoted to her interests,

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and bound myself by many oaths, more gallant than wise, to raise her in the public esteem, and accomplish the grand object she ever had in view—the legitimacy of her children born before the marriage ceremony, which was admitted to have taken place in Saint George's church, Hanover Square.

As she listened to these flattering protestations and illusive hopes, she smiled most bewitchingly upon me, and assured me she agreed with me, that a respect for her dear husband's memory, the dignity of her own character, and the honour of her children first born, rendered her public vindication necessary, and that she would no longer hesitate to grant me such information and materials as were essential to the truth and purification of her history. She here commenced her narrative. She pourtrayed, in vivid colours, the warm glow of her first guilty passion. The fire of nature was in her

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bosom; she could not suppress it, she said. She next tore asunder the veil of darkness that concealed the truth from the eyes of her judges. She exhibited the secret springs whence all her actions flowed, and exulted in the pride of virtue from the moment she became the Earl's wife. While she was engaged in this narrative, the bosom of this modern Hebe was agitated by a sentiment which I could not define; but it filled my soul with an involuntary perturbation, and my heart bled to think that such a woman should be comfortless, though great; persecuted, though powerful; and degraded, though vain.

I never before witnessed such a scene. As the Countess sketched with the warm colouring of youth every particular of her private history, the rising sigh, the tears that strayed along her cheek, betrayed the emotions of her soul, and expressed what her words had not vigour to reveal. At one time she regarded me

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with a look, pale, perturbed, and dejected, at another the fire of hope shone in her eyes; the glow of ambition flushed her heaving bosom; and when she told me she considered mine as the hand mighty to save, or to snatch her from the perils of shame, she looked more like the angel of innocence than a butcher's daughter, translated into a peeress of the realm, and accused of perjury and crime.

This interesting scene continued upwards of five hours: the intervals of the conversation were filled up by a reference to various documents; letters from various branches of the Royal Family, and other eminently distinguished personages; and, by way of episode to my work, the Countess furnished me with a correspondence between the Duke of C——— and herself, which would have terminated in marriage but for the P——— R———, who could not listen to such a measure. Previously to my departure, she commanded me not to imagine that she would

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ever be ungrateful; for she would, after the completion of her Memoirs, recommend my fortunes to her friends at Court, and provide for my brother Jonathan, by giving him the first church preferment in her power.

I pressed her proffered hand again and again to my lips: gathered up every document she had referred to, and retired. Like a Lazar, fresh healed, I went shouting and rejoicing along, dreaming of coronets and crowns, felicitating myself on the honours that awaited me, and ruminating on the important duties that were at length confided to me.

The ambitious man does not repose on a bed of roses; he must rise early and sit late, and must pursue his design with a constant indefatigable attendance; he must be infinitely patient and servile to all those persons whom he expects to rise by; he must endure and digest all sorts of affronts; adore the foot that

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kicks him, and kiss the hand that strikes him.

It is true that I did not experience all this humiliation in the progress of my new ambition, but it is nevertheless true, that I was exposed to a considerable degree of mortification and trouble in the performance of the task I had undertaken. I had to ride to C——— once or twice a week, for the purpose of submitting my manuscript to her inspection. I frequently yielded to her opinion, and altered and mutilated those very passages which I esteemed the brightest ornaments of my work. In general, however, she was enraptured with the performance. She said it would again plant the myrtle of innocence in the bowers of ——— castle: that she would no longer appear like a drooping flower oppressed with dew, refusing to be revived; for that the Being, who gives a deeper tint to the rose than to the lily,

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would in future protect her from the chill blast of calumny and scorn.

Receiving animation from flattery, and energy from praise, I completed my work in the short space of seven weeks; and having announced this joyful event to my lovely Countess, she appointed me to meet her at her town house in Spring Gardens, and read to her such small portion of the manuscript as she had not previously revised. I was punctual to the appointment, and was most graciously received by Lady ——, and her son Henry, to whom she was pleased to introduce me as the best friend of her family, a gentleman for whom she would ever entertain the deepest gratitude, and the most perfect esteem.

To shroud myself from so much painful yet seductive adulation, I displayed my manuscript, and directed her attention to such chapters as she had not hitherto seen. Moved by the mute call of curiosity, and melting in all the warmth of expec-

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tant hope, she leaned over my shoulder, and attended with the utmost solicitude to every word which I read. I concluded, and looked up with confidence to my admiring spectatress. She wept. She was silent.—Tears restrained the expression of her felicity and gratitude. The conflict in her bosom was great.—An involuntary recollection of the past filled her whole soul.—She turned from me, perturbed—cast herself upon a sofa, and burst into a flood of tears.—I seated myself beside her, and looked in her eyes for the interpretation of such affecting signs.

After a long and painful pause, she suddenly laid her hand upon mine, and exclaimed: "The treatment I experience from Lord ———'s connexions and from my own children is unparalleled in the history of cruelty and impudence. So dreadful is it, that it makes me fear my evil genius has marked me out for eternal shame and degradation. Do you

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know, my dear Sir," continued this extraordinary woman, with increased energy of expression, "that, notwithstanding all the merit of your work, and the great and valuable services it is so eminently calculated to render me, I would not, now, for millions that it was printed or published? It was but yesterday that I was menaced by the friends of Lord——, and my children by my public marriage, not to agitate the question of the private one any further, or consent to the publication of my memoirs, under pain of their abandoning me and my interests for ever."

As these words were addressed to me, the fogs of my reason began to ascend. I no longer saw clearly—I viewed every thing through the dim twilight of eve. A cold sweat bedewed my face. My eyes appeared to distil tears of blood. On coming somewhat to my senses, I again made an effort to look at the afflict-

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ed countess through the prism of an author's imagination. But in an instant she broke the magic glass, by wringing her hands, and re-exclaiming, "No, no! not for millions can I consent to the publication of the memoirs of my life."

For a time I endeavoured to revive in her breast those latent sparks of ambition which the persons she alluded to had so laboriously struggled to extinguish; but on perceiving that her mind was made up, and incapable of being swayed, I adopted the language of a mere man of business, and said, that the case was an extremely unfortunate one; for, as I was a public writer by profession, and destitute of all other means of support, I must of necessity offer the manuscript for publication, however repugnant it might be to the feelings of the ——— or of myself. I also stated, that as the manuscript was valued at one thousand guineas, and as it cost me infinite anxiety, toil, and care, it

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could not reasonably be expected that I should cast it into the flames, and return a beggar to the place from whence I came.

I now rose from my seat; and taking my work from the table, bade Lady——— and her son farewell. She detained me to say, that the publication would expose her to an ocean of danger, and to repeat, that she would not for millions see the memoirs of her life circulating in the world. I pleaded my poverty, and retired. I left my address, however, and did not go amongst the printers, so certain was I that she would send me the thousand guineas, and become sole proprietor of the manuscript herself. In this hope I was mistaken. While deluded by it, an idea came into my mind that I esteemed admirably adapted to answer the interests and the wishes of all parties: I conveyed it to Lady ——— in these few words: "I am under great obligations to my brother, the Rev. Doctor Ashe of Bristol. If you will pledge yourself to

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provide for him in the church, I will give you up my manuscript, although it is certainly worth to me, a poor man, no less a sum than from ten to fifteen hundred pounds."

To this intimation I received the following reply: "Mr. Henry ——— presents his compliments, and begs the favour of seeing Captain Ashe on Monday next at Spring Gardens by twelve o'clock, with the manuscript in question." I received this note late on a Saturday night, and remained in one continued dream till the precise hour of my appointment. A mitre for my brother, a distinguished post or a thousand splendid guineas for myself, floated and glittered in every vision; and as I passed on to Spring Gardens, I exultingly repeated to myself: "Well done, thou poor deserted being—thy day of disappointment is at length gone by, and thou now proceedest in triumph to receive the award of all thy industry and

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forbearance." Even on knocking at the door, one of my finest visions swam before my eyes. I saw Lady —— with extended arms inviting me to repose on a bosom of sympathy and forgiveness. I kissed the tear of contrition from her cheek. I heard the sigh of regret rend her bosom. I knocked again; the vision disappeared; yet did I awake with the beams of joy and hope dancing around my head.

The door was opened: I was ushered into a grand saloon, without the ceremony of being announced, and was about to take my magnificent patroness by the hand, with my usual admitted familiarity, when I was instantly checked by some appearances entirely unknown at my former visits to this pre-eminent lady. A gentleman, whom I had never seen before, was seated in the apartment, as was also Mr. Henry ——; but the appearance, the most striking and repelling, was that of my benefactress, who was no

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longer Lady ——, mild, lovely, and benevolent; but Mary C——, a butcher's daughter, rude, vulgar, and termagant; with gore upon her mouth and blood upon her hands, famine in her aspect, and fury in her face.

She stood with her back to the fire; her right leg was advanced, and her right hand elevated towards me in a threatening posture. My eyes, as if by a magic power, were rivetted upon her's in a steady immoveable state; and, like the dangerous fascination of the rattlesnake, the more I endeavoured to remove the charm, the more powerful it became. She fixed her glaring phrenzied glance upon me, till a chilling torpor crept through all my veins, and big drops of cold sweat distilled from my clammy brow.—In this state things remained during a dreary pause of death-like silence, which was at length interrupted by an infernal fit of laughter, that appalled my very soul—and by the Coun-

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tess next turning to the stranger and loudly vociferating: "There, Mr. Graham, there is the wicked madman who has conspired with his brother to obtain and abuse my confidence, and who now comes to EXTORT money, or church preferment, from me, by menacing to publish the memoirs of my life without my concurrence or consent."

The exulting cry of a fiend, let loose from hell, could not have had a more terrible effect upon me than this sound of derision and charge of extortion, of which I was as innocent as an inhabitant of the skies. Scarcely knowing what I did, I snatched up my manuscript which I had laid upon the table, and darted with frantic speed towards the door. I was pursued by Mr. Graham. "Stop, Sir," exclaimed he, with the tone of a police magistrate. "Let me tell you," continued he, "that Lady ——— is advised by Sir Samuel Romilly to make a Bow-Street question of your conduct, and to

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charge you and your brother as conspirators and extortioners," &c.

These threats and this scene entirely emasculated my mind. I sank into a chair in tears, and addressed Mr. Graham in terror. I revealed to him the indigence of my circumstances, yet boasted of the integrity of my designs. "I'll tell you what, Sir," said he, with an abrupt kind of sympathy, "if you give me up your manuscript peaceably, I will present you one hundred pounds, and put a stop to all legal proceedings now hanging over your head." I accepted the humiliating conditions, and left Spring Gardens with the feelings of an innocent man reprieved from the gibbet or the block.

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CHAP. XIV.

He visits the Countess with dreadful Vengeance.—Pursues another Road to Wealth.—Finds it thorny.—His Situation demands as much Amelioration as if he were a Robber on the Highway.—The absence of Virtue clouds the Coruscations of his Genius.—Memorials the Prince Regent.—Receives an Answer from Lord Yarmouth.

It is extremely doubtful, whether by a wise man is generally meant any other than a man who is pursuing the direct road to power or wealth, however dirty or thorny it may be.

A wise man, in short, in the common estimation, is he who becomes great or rich; nor are all the labours he undergoes, or all the frauds and villanies which he commits, ever taken into the account, or in the least considered as any objections to his wisdom.

On leaving Spring Gardens, in the place of appeasing the anguish of my

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wounded spirit, by pouring upon it the balm of philosophy and the unction of religion, I repeated to myself the above maxims, and acted upon them for a time with as much energy and zeal as if they originated in the genuine principles of my own heart.

The day of vengeance is at hand! The modern Medea, the mistress, the wife, the widow of the lord, shall be seen staggering down the steps of the Tribunal of Justice, and crying out in vain for all the perfume of Araby to dispel the odious scent of her guilt. Such was the substance of a notice which I sent to the Countess of ——, and to her friend Mr. Graham. To Mr. Graham the magistrate? No; for the whole was an infamous plot to rob me of the fruit of my labour; but the day of vengeance was at hand, and I disdained an appeal to the laws while I had the capacity to do myself ample justice.

The work, of which I was so shame-

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fully deprived, was called "The PERSECUTED Peeress:" the one I composed in the hour of wrath and vengeance was entitled "The PERJURED Peeress;" an extract from the first volume of which I sent, with my compliments, to Spring Gardens. On the following day a creature of the family, called Cocker, came and treated with me for the manuscript, and paid me for it five hundred guineas, on the express obligation, however, of my dropping the subject, and never more engaging in any work connected with the history of Lady ——, or her late lord.

The success, which attended this dashing enterprise, encouraged me to pursue the road to wealth without considering how dirty and thorny that road was. It is mortifying to literature to have it known, that I received from Mr. Allen, of Paternoster-row, two hundred pounds for a flagitious work, entitled "The Book of Books," and which I composed in ten days, when I could not get five pounds

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for a manuscript which I composed at a time when religion shed her mild beams around my head, and when my heart was as little depraved as my judgment was perverted or corrupt. I had now removed from Pangbourne to Park Place, Baker Street North, and pursued such a life of literary prostitution, as is, perhaps, unparalleled in the annals of letters. Still my name is almost unknown as a man of letters. The reason is, I generally wrote for others, and, on certain stipulations, suffered them to shine in my robes, and appropriate to themselves all the genius, all the talent, and all the industry of my productions. Rare was the grievance, singular the pursuit to which my pen was dedicated without effect; and most arduous if it equalled in difficulty many which I had mastered.

But with all this success, I lived only for others, and had done nothing whatever for myself. A created being more trespassed upon than myself never, per-

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haps, had existence. I was stripped of my money as well as of my fame; and after wasting a rather lengthened career in the uses and abuses of other people, I found myself in a plight of character and fortune truly disgraceful to a man of letters, and as susceptible of amelioration as if I had been a robber on the highways.

Virtue and truth are inseparable, and take their flight together. A mind devoid of truth is a frightful wreck; it is like a great city in ruins, whose mouldering towers just bring to the imagination the mirth and life that once were there, and are now no more.

In the portraits I have given, there did not appear a necessity of adopting any fallacious arrangement, it being my principal care to maintain, in all its purity, the character of strict impartial justice; nor in one instance am I conscious of having departed from the rigid rule of virtue and truth, as described in the paragraph above.

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To substantiate these declarations, and to give force and importance to the integrity of principles, I shall now disclose that era of my life for which I blush the most, and which I consider as pregnant with the most shameful events that have hitherto blotted and disgraced these pages. Previously to this humiliating exposure, I must request the attention of the reader to the following letter: it is a brief recapitulation of my eventful history, and will prove to him how anxiously I endeavoured to emancipate myself from the degenerate slavery in which I was so deeply and fatally merged.

"*To His Royal Highness George Prince Regent, &c. &c.*

Audire est operæ pretium.—HORACE.

"SIR,

"If you do not shrink back at the idea of descending to the unfortunate; if a being of my description do not

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lie beyond the observation of a Prince, grant, I beseech you, a gracious attention to the following narrative.

"I am the son of an old officer, and I pursued myself the profession of arms, till a variety of misfortunes, and an absurd day-dreaming cast of mind, obstructed my way to glory, and caused me to forfeit one civil appointment, and four commissions in the army, two of which I had the honour of having conferred upon me while serving as a volunteer in the field.

"The loss of my civil and military professions was quickly followed with the loss of fame; of that fame, which is as the beams about the sun, or the glory around a picture that shews it to be a saint. The cry of the world was now raised up against me. The world looked into the volume of my follies, and not into the principles of my heart; it regarded me as a lost character, and treated me with a contempt and severity too

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painful for your Royal Highness to hear, or for me to describe.

"Being yet young, my pride revolted at the premature cruelty of such conduct: I abandoned my country altogether; and, during an absence of several years, I subsisted myself on the continents of Europe and America, at one time as a soldier, and at other times as a civilian, minister, and diplomatist, but more frequently as a man of letters, and professor of languages, living and dead.

"Flattered by the estimation in which I was held, both in the old and in the new world, I returned to England, and fondly thought, that, by the exertion of talent, the display of experience, and the power of industry, I should be able to veil over the errors of my youth, and finally recover the affection of my friends, and the good opinion of my countrymen.

"Vain, delusive hopes of man!—It was in vain that I endeavoured to fan, with the refreshing wings of genius, the frigid

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bosom of exasperation and prejudice. It was in vain that I wrote my "Belville and Julia," my "Travels in America," my "Liberal Critic," my "History of the Azores," &c. &c.; for the appearance of poverty, and the absence of fame, clouded over the coruscations of my mind, dimmed the lustre of all my compositions, and compelled me to take for them, one with another, a price too contemptible to be named; and without the advantage of redeeming either public or individual esteem.

"A galling sense of want, joined to injured pride, poverty, and vanity combined, now broke in upon my sensibility, and held so supreme a dominion over me, that I was constrained to abandon the higher chambers of literature, and to sink into the slough of private scandal and political reproach. In short, I was driven to the necessity of considering, not what ought to be written, but what was likely to be read. Hence I became the Sidney

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of "The Phœnix," the Publicola of "The Times," the ** of "The Register," and the author of the "Spirit of the Book."

"It is with an author as it is with a woman—when she once falls from virtue, she exceeds man in the flagrancy of her crimes. I had advanced but a few steps in the mazes of this perverted literature, before I found a return to honour and to reason as impracticable as unsafe. All the virtuous portion of the booksellers fled at my approach, and left me solely at the mercy of those infamous publishers who haunt the avenues of literature, and who subsist by poisoning the springs and rivers that supply the public thirst. Under the tyranny of such traitorous taskmasters, I was condemned to write the "Mask Removed," the "Book of Books," and the "Claustral Palace," which were partly printed, but ultimately suppressed.

"Sir! I abhor, as every honest man must, this nauseous compound of drudgery and

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prostitution, of disloyalty and slavery. And believe me, my Prince, I am not acting from free choice, or for pleasure. I am transgressing from necessity; and my only hope is, that your Royal Highness will be of opinion with the Roman, who says—*Quisquis inops peccat, minor est reus*—he is less guilty who offends from necessity. And, again, *Quem pœnitet peccâsse pœnè est innocens*—a penitent sinner is nearly as good as an innocent man. Sir! I am penitent, I do repent. I do wish, with tears, to recal the past; to compensate for the past; to conciliate myself with the state; and to devote myself once again to the true interests of my country.

" It may reasonably be asked, where is the effect of this contrition? Where are the fruits of this repentance? Sir, the great see the world but upon one side only, and are ignorant of those springs and principles which controul the conduct of the indigent; therefore they can with difficulty form a real judgment of the cause of my continuance in so de-

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generate and lamentable a condition. I presume to repeat it; I have fallen too immensely low to rise by the means of my own individual struggles; and the booksellers, like the keepers of wild beasts, take care to keep me upon a diet so low, that I never can, from my own immediate exertion, emancipate myself from so disgraceful and dangerous a bondage.

"There is but one mode which can possibly extricate me from this treacherous and degrading compromise of honour for subsistence, and that mode manifests itself in this last effort of expiring genius; in this last and deep appeal to the humanity of your Royal Highness; yes, Sir, I dare to beg some small appointment, civil or military, in any one of His Majesty's distant colonies, even in New South Wales, should other places be deemed too important for me.

"Sir! it would be superfluous to say more. Should this appeal awaken your sensibility; should it excite, in the smallest degree, the exercise of those

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precepts of generosity and mercy which govern your actions, I shall ever gratefully remain, &c. &c.

"THOMAS ASHE.

"*No.* 11, *Park Place*, 1*st May*, 1814."

No considerable time had elapsed before I was honoured with the following answer:

"SIR,

"I have received, in a cover, your memorial to the Prince Regent; and, in obedience to his Royal Highness's pleasure to receive all memorials and petitions through the medium of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, I have enclosed the same to Lord Sidmouth.

"I have the honour to be,

"SIR,

"Your most obedient,

"Humble Servant,

"YARMOUTH.

"*To Thomas Ashe, Esquire, &c. &c.*"

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CHAP. XV.

Lord Sidmouth instructs Sir Nathaniel Conant to send for the Author.—His Interview with Sir Nathaniel.—He again awakens to a Sense of Honour and Dignity.—Is granted a Free Passage to Botany Bay.—Repairs to the Isle of Wight.—Loses his Ship.

ENTHUSIASM, more or less, is an inseparable appendage to the mind of man. The novel projectors in philosophy and religion may ridicule it, and seriously exclaim against the folly of it, but they only quarrel with nature, which, after all, right or wrong, will form our pleasures, or constitute our pains.

To a cold, calculating, political character, there was nothing in my Lord Yarmouth's reply that could charm the imagination, or convey the consolations of hope to the dwellings of the mind. But

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I was generally directed by the most ungoverned sallies of enthusiasm, and to me it was a source of endless gratification. I instantly formed the solemn resolution of never afterwards writing a line, save in the cause of morality and religion, of philosophy and truth.

My soul, now actuated and determined by its own haughty and elevated sentiments of virtue and dignity, asserted fates and prospects superior to the low interests of this world. I was charmed by the return of this nobility of sentiment, by this clear and manifest majesty of the soul, just as beauty is delighted with the flattering view of itself in a mirror. The elevation I felt within myself, at the idea of a restoration to honour and integrity, was, I trust, a plain proof that I was not a totally lost character, and on that account it struck me with rapture and exultation.

To the honour of human nature be it made known, that my hopes on this oc-

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casion were not groundless. Towards the end of May I received the following note:—"Mr. Conant wishes to see Mr. Ashe any morning before eleven o'clock, at No. 14, Portland Place.

"To Thomas Ashe, Esq. No. 11, Park Place, Baker Street, North."

The mind of man naturally pays homage to unseen power. I felt obscure hopes, and obscure fears. The passions called upon my heart in the tumult of enthusiasm; and, as I knocked at the door, so many objects crowded on my imagination, that I could scarcely announce my name to the servant who came to admit me.

These passions, however, soon subsided into a happy calm at the appearance of the power that gave birth to them. Mr. Conant received me with encouraging affability, and employed the most refined management to produce to view a more amiable picture than I had drawn of myself. Lord Sidmouth, he said, had shewn him my memorial to the Prince, and he

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gave it as his opinion, that if I were pressed by no appetites, and invaded by no evils, or had always at hand a supply against want, I should be as innocent as any other man of easy circumstances; I should form no designs to disturb individual or public repose; and should require nothing but my own principles of honour to direct me.

"But, Sir," continued Mr. Conant, "you should have no temptations to violate your natural intellectual taste of virtue and dignity. We perceive you have been a prey to evils and to appetites, which you had no means of allaying but at your country's cost; and we are willing to believe that you have ever been impelled more by wretchedness than inclination to commit the acts which you confess to be the disgrace or dishonour of your life."

While this very amiable man addressed these few words to me, I felt a deep sense of my own native misery; and the

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truth broke in upon me from every quarter; although I hid it like a midnight conspirator, and dared not breathe it to my own hearing. It broke in upon me amidst my hopes and pride, and banished every sentiment from my breast that was either counterfeit or deceitful. Nor could any thing discover the conscious sense I had of my own wretchedness, more than my desire to accord its motives no manner of palliation.

It was not so with Mr. Conant: his principal aim was to reform me by kindness, to inspire me with a laudable self-opinion, to cultivate in my heart peaceable and generous affections; in short, his precepts and instructions tended to produce what was good and useful, and to point out how I should become virtuous, and act agreeably to the dictates of a noble and upright nature. As he proceeded, my soul was confounded: I never before felt the same effects from any other person's admonition. I was enraged

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with myself for the slavish life I had led. I was conscious of the truth of all he said. I was conscious it was my duty to pay implicit obedience to what he should advise; and he wished to know the exact situation of my affairs. With a depressed heart, and tears in my eyes, I gave him the exact substance of the two preceding volumes of my history.

Mr. Conant was evidently alarmed and grieved at this melancholy retrospect, as it convinced him that it was utterly impossible to assist me with the facility he at first conceived. I was involved in debt to the amount of twelve thousand pounds; and were I put into an office of any emolument, my creditors would immediately torment me for their individual sums. My character was blotted and abased, so that if I were accorded a place of trust, either at home or abroad, the opposers of government would set up a hideous cry against the Prince Regent, and swear that a political writer was

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bribed, by a public employment, to abandon the interests of his country, and bury the facts and the talents which it was acknowledged he possessed.

To combat these difficulties, Mr. Conant required some little time; he declared that he would not abandon me to my fate: that Lord Sidmouth had consulted with him, and that a disposition existed to see me in the possession of those virtues, precepts, and circumstances, necessary to form an honest and good man.

Nothing discovers the strong sense we have of our own wretchedness more than our eagerness to get it out of view. The deist shews his feeling of guilt, while he fortifies his sensual heart with endless sophisms drawn round it, and seeks to elude conscience with arguments evidently snatched up by distress and despair.

It is the internal perception of human misery, and of a misgiving conscience, that gives irresistible force to the wild rhapsodies of fanatics. It is in vain to

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reason with them against a sentiment they really feel and experience; and their discourses are infectious, because all mankind feel as they do.

The fears of misery are sentiments of the mind too, which, like all other instinctive sentiments, cannot be tried at the bar of reason, and yet are better established, and more present, than the conclusions of reason. When a horse discovers a lion breaking into the pastures, and moving towards him, he beholds in his form and terrific motions evidences of the lordly animal's might and fury, that will not suffer him to hesitate or doubt.

If the horse were a modern philosopher, he should, at the sight of an animal so much beneath him in size, await at least, and put his force to a trial, before he drew the shameful conclusion. He should suspect that his dread was a prejudice for want of due examination, and he ought to summon reason to his assistance. But the horse, by a secret light

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of sentiment, which cannot be traced or accounted for, but which yet is very just, measures in a moment the power of the lion with his own, without scale or compass, without the laws of mathematics or geometry, and flies by the impression of an internal sense of fear.

In like manner, I yielded to a sense of natural misery in my own breast, and on the day of my appointment with Mr. Conant, waited on him with the fixed determination of imploring him to employ all his interposition for the purpose of obtaining one distinct favour, namely, that I might be sent as soon as possible out of the country. As government had small offices vacant at Botany Bay, and as it frequently freighted ships for that settlement, I anxiously proposed to be sent thither; nor would I encourage any other mode of relief which the humanity of Mr. Conant was frequently disposed to propose, and recommend the adoption of.

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No, nothing would serve me but expatriation. While I was explaining to Mr. Conant the necessity of this measure, I saw him constantly awake to the misery I described, and alive to every feeling of compassionate benevolence. Whatever error of mine he discussed, I still always perceived a generous principle struggling to overcome the degeneracy it deplored. Whatever object he aimed at, he always endeavoured to melt my heart, and alarm my conscience by pathetic decription and serious remonstrance; while his sentiments were always delivered in a novel and energetic manner, that impressed them strongly on my mind.

Finding, however, that I was bent upon exile, and acknowledging, in fact, that my fortunes were too broken to admit of repair at home, he had the goodness to promise that I should have a free passage to New South Wales, and a letter to Governor M'Quarry, recommending me to his attention, and instructing him

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to provide for me, in case he found he could do so in a manner consistent with the colonial good. Mr. Conant went further, and said, that although Lord Sidmouth could do no more for me in his public capacity, still he was willing to extend his humanity towards me in his quality of an individual, and that in consequence he had instructed him (Mr. Conant) to let me have two pounds per week till something could be devised to meet the exigencies of my state.

Those, who are acquainted with the two preceding volumes of my history, may conceive with what sacred transport and warmth I attended to these generous professions, and with what gratitude and rapture I saw them more than realized in a very short time. To be brief—Mr. Conant, finding that he could not dissuade me from going to Botany Bay, and finding also, on minute investigation, that my debts and my fame were not within the pale of redemption, came into

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my opinion; and as he found no public money could possibly be diverted to my case, he interested several humane characters in my behalf, and finally sent me off to the Isle of Wight, with money for my equipment, and an order for two pounds a-week, till the ship was ready to depart.

That happy hour at length arrived. The General Hewet East Indiaman came round to Portsmouth. I had orders, from Mr. Capper of the Secretary of State's office, to apply to Captain Stedman of the Captivity hulk, for instructions to go out in the General Hewet. I applied. Captain Stedman referred me, from counter orders, to Captain Patten, the agent of transports; and Captain Patten informed me he had no authority whatever to send me out. I waited upon him the next day: the document respecting me was in his hands, but unfortunately the General Hewet had that

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morning sailed. I left the office with folded arms, cursing my destiny, and sunk into a listless and inanimate state, until several unexpected circumstances concurred to warm me into life and energy.

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CHAP. XVI.

A sudden Change.—Attends to the Enemies of his Patrons.—Disdains the Life of an Exile.—Communicates with Lord P———.—Is ordered up to Town by his Lordship.—The Princess of Wales patronizes him.—His Soul overlooks Lord Sidmouth and Carlton House.—He is engaged to advocate the Cause of "The suffering Princess."

LIBERTY is the natural endowment of innocence, consequently a right to liberty infers virtue and dignity, whilst, on the other hand, subjection is the clearest evidence of a vicious nature, and openly impeaches the worth and dignity of man.

But to conceive a just idea of the passion of liberty, it is necessary to make an estimate of the powers of human pride and conscience which form that passion. No one is able to bear a reproachful idea of himself, except those few Christians

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who are resolved in earnest to attack their own vices, and make the sacrifice required by the gospel.

We see the bulk of the world making it the chief art of life, and employing the most political management, to produce a flattering picture of themselves. Various treatises have been written by divines and philosophers on the manifold and impervious operations of pride; and yet no one ever perhaps had an idea of the extent of genius and variety of artifice by which pride conceals the corruption of our hearts.

The fanatic, indeed, in general terms, acknowledges the depravity and wretchedness of his nature; but even this vague acknowledgment is seldom made, until he has persuaded himself that he is actually purified by the particular favour of Providence. Pride is not thus employed in order to conceal us from others only; its principal address is to hide us from ourselves, and to save us from the insuf-

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ferable feelings of our own depravity, misery, and meanness.

I join misery and meanness to depravity, because we have a tacit sense of their association. We are ashamed of a violent wretched state, as if it were our own fault. Our blushes for poverty shew that in sentiment we acquit Providence of the evils of life, and place them at our own doors, although reason be enabled to trace our misery from our crimes. We also conceive a relation between merit and happiness; for which reason people generally affect the appearance of happiness.

It is in consequence of the attempt men make to impose on themselves, that we are generally strangers to the elaborate operations and artifices of our own pride, even when it is most busily employed; for the same reasons that make us deceitful in this matter, make us also desirous of remaining strangers to the deceit. We are not willing to know that

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we are hiding the corruption, whose existence we would fain make a secret to ourselves.

Without having intended to write an essay upon pride, I found it necessary to submit to the reader the above thoughts, in order to prepare him to account for the sudden change which marked my conduct, after the sailing of the General Hewet, and the entire revolution of principle and sentiment which I experienced, when I was to believe, by some designing persons, that the delay of my departure was a happy respite from slavery, and that I should employ every moment of it in asserting my innocence, and in charging my benefactors with a kidnapping and treacherous design.

Every honest man must allow, after what I have previously recited, as to the conduct of Lord Sidmouth and Mr. Conant, that nothing could be more unjust or atrocious than a charge of this kind; but such was my love of liberty, vanity,

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and pride, founded on the principles laid down in this chapter, that I began to attend to the enemies of my patrons, and consider, with them, by what means I should openly impeach the worth and dignity of two excellent men.

People are rendered totally incapable of propriety by the want of common sense, and still more, by a want of that honest pride which arises from a consciousness of lofty and generous sentiments.

The absence of these qualities is generally supplied by an arrogant stupidity, an impudence unconscious of defect, a cast of malice, and an uncommon tendency to criticism: as if nature had given these her step-children an instinctive intelligence that they can rise out of contempt only by the depression of others.

For the same reason it is, that immediately after the departure of the General Hewet I ceased to cultivate the generous sentiments which I before approved and assumed. Instead of them, I aimed

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only at appearances, which required no self-denial; and thus, without acquiring the virtues, I sacrificed my honour and sincerity: whence it came to pass, that I had the least principle at the time I had the greatest appearance of it; and that, in point of fact, I had only arrived at the subtle corruption, or stupid illusion, of uniting vice with the dress and complexion of virtue.

While under the strongest paroxysm of this vicious or delusive state of mind, I wrote a letter to Viscount P———, than whom no nobleman had more of the attachment and confidence of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales. I set forth the slavery of my condition in the most glowing colours, imploring him to interest Her Royal Highness in my behalf, and to have such measures pursued as would save me from the necessity of transportation, and snatch me from the jaws of fate.—To this letter of mine, sent from Ryde in the Isle of Wight, I re-

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ceived the following brief notification: "Mr. Templeman informs Mr. Ashe, that his letter, to a certain nobleman, has been received. It is the intention of a certain party to do something for Mr. Ashe; therefore he may decline going to Botany Bay, and inform Mr. Templeman in what manner he thinks he can be served at home, and also transmit all the particulars of his life, circumstances, situation, &c. He is to write to Edmund Templeman, Esquire, care of Messieurs Harvey and Co. Booksellers, Gracechurch Street."

From the hour in which I published my "Spirit of the Book," or Memoirs of the Princess of Wales, I felt an uncontroulable opinion that I should one day become the object of her esteem and protection. Previously to the publication of that work, she did not stand high in the estimation of the public; but no sooner did it appear, than a spirit of chivalry seized upon the nation, and pity and sym-

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pathy enlisted in her cause. The passions, which I thus stirred up in her favour, passed like the sweep of a whirlwind over the whole face of the country, overwhelming every obstacle that could injure her character, or impede the progress of her new-acquired fame.

With these convictions firmly engraven on my mind, it was not without considerable mortification and astonishment that I found no manner of notice taken of me, and that all my prospects from that quarter were likely to terminate as the visions of an enthusiast. In proportion as these bleeding ideas gained upon me, so in proportion was my joy increased to a degree of intoxication, when I read, re-read, and read again and again: "It is the intention of a certain party to do something for you;" and when, in the height of my vanity, I was at length enabled to exclaim, that I had not advocated the part of a worthless and ungrateful woman.

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I was the more flattered with this acknowledgment, because it is with a patroness as it is with beauty. When once the affections are fixed, a new face with a higher degree of beauty will not always have a higher degree of power to remove them, because our affections arise from a source within ourselves, as well as from external beauty; and when the tender passion is attached by a particular object, the imagination surrounds that object with a thousand ideal embellishments, which exist only in the mind of a lover.

Hence I returned to my patroness after a silence of three years, with an undecayed sensibility to her merits and circumstances. I returned with a loyal and virtuous attachment, too, that cast a manly hue over my own nature; it quickened and strengthened my admiration of virtue, and my detestation of vice; it again opened my eyes to my own imperfections, and gave me a pride in pleasing my royal mistress; it inspired me with

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heroic sentiments, generosity, a contempt of life, a boldness of enterprise, and a purity of thought: all of which sentiments and resolutions I conveyed to Mr. Templeman: at the same time giving him the information which he more particularly required.

The letter, which contained the matter just alluded to, had all the immediate desired effect; it brought me this laconic notice:

Sir,

You are desired to call upon Mr. Bradley, No. 3, Havant Street, Portsea, and he will supply you with funds and instructions for proceeding to town with as little delay as possible. On arriving in London, go immediately to the house of Charles Crandon, Esquire, No. 4, Catherine Court, Tower Hill, and he will cast some further light upon your future destiny.

Your's, faithfully,

EDMUND TEMPLEMAN.

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People whose breasts are dulled with ordinary transactions, or stupified by nature, can form no idea of the effect of this short letter on my heart and understanding. It made my mind flash with the impetuosity of the electric fluid. I also acted on the same tangible principles. I broke up my establishment on a sudden in the Isle of Wight, and in less than four-and-twenty hours was fixed in Catherine Court; my attachment to the Princess taking a similitude to devotion, and almost deifying the object of my admiration.

The heart is won in conversation by its own passions. Its pride, its grandeur, its afflictions, lay it open to the enchantment of an insinuating address. Flattery is a gross charm; but who is proof against a gentle and yielding disposition, that infers your superiority with a delicacy so fine, that you cannot see the lines of which it is composed?

Generosity, disinterestedness, a noble

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love of truth that will not deceive, feeling as to the distresses of others, and greatness of soul, inspire us with admiration along with love, and take our affections as it were by storm; but above all, we are seduced by a view of the tender and affectionate passions; they carry a soft infection, and the heart is betrayed to them by its own particular forces.

If the reader will judge from these opinions, he may form a just estimate of my sentiments on my arrival at No. 4, Catherine Court, Tower Hill, where I was received by a lady, who had the happy art, that, in conversation, and in the intercourse of life, lays hold of our affections, and engages all the best passions of the human breast. This lady was Mrs. Crandon, a native of Bridgewater in Somersetshire, and the daughter of a gentleman farmer, an old tenant on the P—— estates. Hence Mrs. Crandon was intimately known to that distinguished

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family; and hence it was, that she was appointed, by Lord or Lady P———, to take the active agency of my distracted affairs. I do not here speak of Mr. Crandon, because, though extremely polite and friendly to me, he left to Mrs. Crandon the unmolested conduct of every thing appertaining to my future rise in civil life.

The general air of truth, honesty, and honour, which Mrs. Crandon employed during the early part of her mission, could not fail to secure all my confidence and esteem; and when she dictated to me the form of a letter I was to write to Lord Sidmouth, so infatuated was I, that I wrote it, although it was insolent and outrageous in the extreme. I also wrote to Mr. (now Sir Nathaniel) Conant in the same ungrateful language, and told him that, as I had the good fortune to be taken by the hand by those who estimated me at a higher price than a convict for Botany Bay, I could dispense

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with his interposition in my favour any longer. To so harsh and unmerited an intimation this truly worthy and enlightened character sent me these prophetic lines:—

Dear Sir,

I shall always rejoice in your well-doing. I never approved of your New South Wales scheme, and have yet hopes you may prosper in your own country. Although it is an invariable rule with me never to meddle in the affairs of public writers, I cannot help wishing that you may avoid the necessity of plunging into that literary slough in which I found you, and out of which you once evinced so much laudable ambition to be extricated. This is saying more than I ought.

Believe me your's faithfully,

Portland Place, &c. N. CONANT

I am free to confess that this mild and forbearing conduct in Mr. Conant cost

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me some moments of reflection and remorse; but the Crandons took special care to bar the door of contrition and repentance, by for ever dinning in my ears the illiberality of Lord Sidmouth's conduct, and by attributing to him and to Mr. Conant more of policy than humanity in all their measures respecting me. It was their chief care also to contrast the intentions of the Princess of Wales with those of my late patrons; and to convince me of the liberality of her Royal Highness, I was advanced twenty pounds for present exigencies, found in furnished lodgings in Catherine Court, had my table at Mr. Crandon's, and was regularly supplied with ten pounds per month.

The first and noblest source of delight, in the mind of a visionary, arises from royal patronage. This sacred fountain I considered I had arrived at. Royal patronage, by an authority which the soul is utterly unable to resist, took possession

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of all my faculties, and absorbed them in a brutal astonishment. The passion it inspired me with was evidently a mixture of pride, curiosity, and exultation: but they were stamped in a manner that bestowed on me a different air and character from those passions on any other occasion. In the contemplation of my royal patroness, my motions were suspended, and I remained for some time, until the emotion wore off, wrapped in silence, and gratitude amounting to worship.

At such times as Mrs. Crandon talked of her Royal Highness's great goodness, and how thankful she was to me for advocating her in so eloquent and so able a style as I employed in my "Spirit of the Book," I declare to the reader my soul seemed to rise out of a trance; it assumed an unknown grandeur; it was seized with a new appetite, that in a moment effaced its former little prospects and desires; it was wrapt out of the sight and

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consideration of the diminutive vulgar world into a kind of gigantic creation, where it found room to dilate itself to a size agreeable to its presumed nature and grandeur; it overlooked Lord Sidmouth and the clouds upon Whitehall, and saw nothing in view around it but immense objects. In truth, I regarded myself as the future prime minister of England, and was employed in collecting up the names of all my poor relatives, with the view of one day pushing them into power, or of introducing them into Parliament.

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CHAP. XVII.

Exposes a Design against the Honour and Reputation of the Prince.—Is instructed by Lady ——— to attack him.—He sinks into the Character of a Slave.—His Employers urge him to shiver a Branch of that sacred Tree under whose Foliage we have so long flourished.

AMBITION, in general, assumes to itself an empire equal to that of the soul; it rules and inspires every part of the body, and makes use of all the human powers; but it particularly takes the passions under its charge and direction, and turns them into a kind of artillery, with which it does infinite execution.

Flushed with ambition, and dreaming of one day becoming prime minister, I imagined, from the conduct and conversation of the Crandons, that I had nothing more to do than to rush into the presence of my royal patroness, and receive the reward of all the mighty service

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I had rendered her in the publication of the "Spirit of the Book." It appeared, notwithstanding, that these honours and advantages were not to be accorded me, till I proceeded from service to service, and established the character of the Princess, by preferring charges against the Prince, which, if allowed to be founded on facts, would for ever mark him with the infallible characteristics of cruelty, meanness, oppression, and dishonour.

At this particular period the ordinary opposition assumed the features of a hydra party, among whose heads they counted that of the Princess of Wales; and at this particular period too, their minds were wrought up to a pitch of fury against the crown, which could scarcely have been exceeded, if they had, in fact, been long subjected to the most severe and wanton tyranny. The direction which they gave their rage was the most mischievous that could be devised by malignant ingenuity. They were ex-

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asperated, not merely against the crown, a political party, or the minister of the day, but against the princes of the blood; a respect for whom is the source of all confidence in society, and the cement that gives stability to all its institutions.

To effect their diabolical purpose, they determined to select a particular victim, and having fixed on one, His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, whose official conduct was irreproachable, it was resolved that calumny should be diffused by all arts and methods of propagation; that nothing should be too gross or too refined, too cruel or too trifling to be practised; that no regard should be had to the rules of honourable hostility; that every weapon should be accounted lawful; and that those, who could not thrust at life, should keep themselves in play with petty malevolence, to tease with feeble blows, and impotent disturbance.

On passing these dignified resolutions,

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there remained a still more important question for debate; that is, who was to act for the hydra, by writing down the Prince, and by preferring such crimes against him, from time to time, as they might think fit to suggest. Much embarrassment rose out of this enquiry. The Morning Chronicle could not be trusted; the Independent Whig was too plunging and wild; the Pilot too cautious and oscillating; besides, Mr. Phipps of the News, the high priest of the ———, had but lately published his recantation, and consequently exposed the extent and character of the hydra's designs.

In this dilemma they employed the Crandons, their city agents, to ingratiate themselves with me; to flatter my vanity, and make me believe, that although I might not possibly strike with force at first, still that they would poison my weapon, and render me finally capable of giving a mortal blow to the object of their detestation—the Prince! "He must," says

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Lady ——, in a letter to Mrs. Crandon, containing a remittance of money for me, "he must have the merit of improving on the example of Ankerstrom and Ravaillac, and of making use of a power more subtle and more pliable than the fire and the sword. He must attack the Prince with a weapon more cold and deadly, with an instrument that murders without the mark of blood, that palls its victim in the covering of public sacrifice, and will make him, in the eye of the ignorant, like Brutus, who stabbed the mighty Cæsar for his country's good."

To this great and most important of all results, this cause and end of all royal patronage, hydra argument, and eloquence; to this attractive power, to whose magnetic force all the lightest or weightiest bodies of treacherous reasoning must gravitate, I have, with mixed sensations of regret and satisfaction, at length arrived—regret, that a British subject and man of letters should have

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been actuated by base and infamous motives in the employment of his pen; and satisfaction, that I feel it honourable to repent, and able to expose the magnitude and atrocity of the hydra's views.

What now, after the publication of this work, will be the consequence of their procedure; their inroads on Carlton House, and their violations of the rights of the Prince Regent? It will draw contempt, and I trust it will also draw vengeance down upon their heads. Setting aside their budget of moral accusations, and confining myself to their calumny, I assert that there is no punishment equal to their crime. It was an intentional robbery of the highest nature. The Prince was to have been robbed of his honour, and, through him, the whole body of the community was to have been defrauded of their dearest fame. But gratitude and principle forbid it. I now range myself in opposition

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to the hydra; nor will I give up the contest tamely. I will have a struggle for my Prince, and for the redemption of my character; and if I must perish, I will perish nobly; I will expire with loyalty in my mouth, and innocence in my bosom, while their exit shall be marked with many a tear.

When two or more passions or sentiments unite, they are not so readily distinguished, as if they had appeared separately; however, it is easy to observe, that the complacency and admiration we feel in the presence of generous patrons, is made up of respect and affection; and that we are painfully disappointed when we see such persons act a base and ignoble part.

The reader is already conscious of the respect and admiration I entertained for my patrons, while I conceived their conduct towards me was the simple offspring of disinterested benevolence and grandeur of mind; but he is not yet ac-

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quainted with my opinions and feelings when I discovered the real intent and character of their views. How humiliating was my change from Lord Sidmouth to Lord P———! By this fatal change of patronage, I was to be deprived of liberty, of conscience, and of genius. My influence and talents were to be annexed to the tyranny of a hydra, and I was again doomed to become, what I was before Lord Sidmouth took me by the hand, the slave of traitorous usurpation and ignominious power. I was humbly to exchange the independence and happiness of a colonial settler for the precarious protection of the hydra; and I was to endure the yoke of obedience about my neck, as the tacit acknowledgment of my content and degradation.

Gracious God! what have I written? Was it darkness or perversion that pervaded my mind? Had I a heart corrupt, or an understanding clouded? Was I reduced to this life of servility from na-

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tive baseness of character, or from a dark necessity, which made me forget the lofty tone, and dignified designs it is known I entertained in the days of comfort and prosperity?—I trust it was from necessity; for when my mind was poisoned against Lord Sidmouth, and Sir Nathaniel Conant, when I cast off their protection, and forfeited their esteem, I was reduced to beggary, and to a savage perturbed state of mind. Shocked at the past, disgusted at the present, and dreading to contemplate the future, I knew not which way to turn, or to what class of men I should look for support and encouragement. Overpowered with confusion, I eagerly listened to the first offers of relief. The hydra association assailed me. In my urgent necessity, I closed with their schemes; I believed their promises. Like one that had no confidence in himself, I was glad to repose my trust in any other, however vicious, that would undertake to guide me.

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It is painful to have the eye continually on scenes of disgrace, but I cannot at this moment turn it to a more cheerful object of contemplation. I have said that I closed with their schemes, and I had soon to obey their mandates. Nor were these few or trifling. The head quarters of the hydra were held at Blackheath, and the chief staff consisted of Mr. W———, Mr. B———, C——— J———, and Lords F———, M———, P——— and P———. The recruiting parties in the city were commanded by Mr. T——, M. P. Mr. A——, M. P. Mr. W——, &c. It was the province of the staff to maintain the rights of the Princess in parliament. It was the duty of the recruiting parties to raise friends in the city to favour the claims of her Royal Highness, and it was my distinct office to compose parliamentary orations against the Prince; pathetic harangues to be delivered in the Council Chamber in favour of the Princess, and squibs and

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flights to be put into the newspapers, in order to excite the attention, and exasperate the mind of the public. It was also in my instructions to hire vagabonds to hoot the Regent whenever he appeared in any place of public amusement, or in any of the great avenues of London and Westminster; but it was particularly the first of my duties to drive him from the Opera whenever he should happen to be there in presence of the Princess, and thereby convince him that the people were decidedly against his conduct to that illustrious personage, and that they would one day compel him to do her justice, and receive her into his embrace in spite of every antipathy.

It must be confessed that my task was laborious as infamous; and it was rendered more so by the various devices to which the hydra had recourse, in order to hide, even from me, the names of its members, and the extent of its designs. The same parties seldom saw me twice,

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and never in one place. I therefore had to take instructions from persons whom I did not know, and had every now and then to repair to places distant from Catherine Court, and frequently without meeting the parties to whom I had orders to repair. But in general my missions of this nature were to Lady ——— at Blackheath. In compliance with my general instructions, I had to wait upon her almost daily, and to consult her opinions upon my writings, without having any respect for her talents or her abilities.

Before I proceed, I must pause for a moment, while I contemplate the degrading spectacle that was passing—a spectacle that engrossed the attention, and claimed the indignation of the world. I must contemplate this hydra phenomenon of modern ages, this new constellation in the political hemisphere, not rising by slow degrees, and from small coruscations, but bursting forth at once

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into full vigour and maturity; not cherished in the soft lap of virtue and patriotism, but shaking off, in its outset, the long established dominion of a sovereign master, and employed in anxious endeavours to shiver a branch of that sacred tree, under whose foliage the persons thus employing themselves so long flourished, and obtained all their force. Yet, notwithstanding their numerous heads, and concentrated endowments, it was necessary to purchase and corrupt me; to clothe my compositions with the sacred garb of patriotism and public spirit, and arm my pen with powers to insult a Prince, impose upon a nation, and overthrow the fabric of the state.

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CHAP. XVIII.

Intercourse with Lady ———, and other Friends of the Princess.—Receives Instruction to write a Pamphlet, to insult the Prince, and impose upon the Nation.—Picture of Lady ———.

A VARIETY and flush of colouring is generally the refuge of painters, who are not able to animate their designs. We may call a lustre of colouring the glare of painting, under which are hid the want of nature and of strength.

None but a painter of real genius can be severe and modest in his colouring, and flatter the eye at the same time. The glow and variety of colours give a pleasure of a very different kind from the object of painting. When foreign ornaments, gilding, and carving come to be considered as necessary to the beauty

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of pictures, they are a plain diagnostic of a decay in taste and power.

The same may be said of an author as of a painter; at least it may well be applied to me, and to the judges of my literature. Having neither truth nor virtue to set off our compositions, we had recourse to base epithets and libels, and each seemed to acquire bitterness in proportion as they advanced, having nothing in contemplation but the foul idea of destroying the character of the Prince for ever. This grossness of style was not of my own choice, for base epithets, and slanderous falsehoods amount to no proof of innocence in the enraged party, but the contrary, as they are supposed to substitute desperation for argument: besides our want of good manners, and apprehension of exposure were so disgustingly and cursorily expressed, that it seemed as if we supposed we could destroy our victim with foul language. In the meridian of Billingsgate, such

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vulgarity might have had weight; but in any other circle, such outrageous folly could only tend to defeat its own purposes.

In any suggestions, however, of this moderate and literary nature, the hydra would never listen to me. They appeared to have conceived the hope to execute, by violence and defamation, what was in its nature impracticable, and what, if possible, would be more detrimental to themselves, than to that illustrious person, whom they were labouring so insidiously to destroy: but the folly of cunning is more blind than any other species of human weakness. The indefatigable hydra employed me in labouring hard and incessantly to do that for the Princess of Wales, through the medium of public sympathy, which they could not through the medium of justice;—they wanted me to make her claims, as a woman, supersede that influence which should be wholly dependant on veracity.

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The various candalous arts I was compelled to employ, under the idea of espousing the cause of the Princess of Wales, were of that hated complexion as could have no weight with a discerning or generous mind; but the hydra perceived with exultation that their influence on the minds of the people was astonishing and tyrannous. All our abominable and malicious representations were dissipated with unceasing industry from one part of the realm to the other, and were the usual topics of conversation with all degrees and sexes, from the milliners in the heights of Mary-le-Bone, to the hucksters in the purlieus of Wapping. The intention of the hydra was to overthrow the Prince by sap, and with regularity. I believe I have shewn that they were not very scrupulous as to the means.

In this dark, base, and shameful manner, has the honour and propriety of the Prince of Wales been sported with;

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and such is the frailty and imbecility of our nature, but particularly in the unenlightened part of society, that the error which their faith had adopted was nearly immoveable. They considered the arguments of truth to remove their error as an attack upon their pride or perception, and they became more tenacious, in proportion as they were unwillingly refuted by the Treasury papers.

After spending much time in the practice of sending blind, equivocal, and unauthenticated paragraphs to the newspapers and other periodical publications, and after the hydra had vented its spleen, scurrility, and folly, against the Prince, I received instructions to compose a large pamphlet for general distribution, and to give in a correct estimate of the expenses of the press. A sketch of the required principles of the publication were given to me, but the title and ornaments were left to myself. This was a work of some labour: it took

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a month's continual industry for its completion, and it bore the title of "The ROYAL CONTRAST, or Patriot Princess,—composed with a view of defending a highly injured female, and of restoring the credit of a man, by checking the still farther progress of those abuses and irregularities that have of late so much sullied his honour, and diminished his importance; and by inspiring him with sentiments worthy the character of a British Ruler."

Having finished this laborious work, I was willing and eager to lay it at the feet of Her Royal Highness. With this intent I departed for Blackheath, and called upon Lady ——— to solicit her to obtain that honourable permission for me. But it was no longer Lady ——— that I found at Blackheath; or, if it was, she was so completely metamorphosed and changed, that I paused to contemplate, before I dared think of addressing her. Those soft, great, and noble traits

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in her character, which induced me to esteem and adore her, when I thought her my protectress from disinterested motives, became obliterated in the ruin of comparison, and I beheld nothing but a malign intriguing woman, whose patronage appeared perverted from a blessing to a curse.

In the enjoyment of liberty, man asserts the innocence and dignity he adores; and revolts against restraint and ignominy; he lays claim to an upright nature, and disclaims, with infinite hatred, the misery and vice that make a despotic power necessary to chain him down.

The real grandeur and worth inferred by liberty to man, immersed in the vice he loves, impatient of shame, and liable to the outrage of conscience, is like the suspension of Prometheus's vulture. It lifts him out of meanness and dejection; it sooths him with a prospect of native excellence; it drives servile fear to a distance; it enlarges

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and ennobles his soul; it inspires him with language and attitudes, that astonish and ravish, and with sublime and celestial ideas that bear him far above the human state.

What the freeman experiences from possession, I began to feel from hope. From the moment I saw Lady ——— a slave to the passions of pride and ambition, disappointment or remorse, I blushed for the loss of my liberty, and formed a secret resolution to emancipate myself from the gilded mendicity to which I was chained, as soon as I possibly could. This favourable determination on my part was facilitated by a recent occurrence in which the hydra was deeply involved. I allude to the trial between Mr. Phipps and Lady Perceval, wherein Lord Ellenborough severely reprimanded her Ladyship; accused her openly of perjury; and, at the same time, hinted that he was not ignorant of the mean, mischievous, and ruinous confederacy

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which existed against the peace and dignity of the Prince.

It is an ungracious kindness, when a person offers to let in the rays of understanding upon those minds which are used to subsist in the dark. It is like opening day-light upon a nest of owls; it always sets them to screeching, to flight, or to confusion. It was the day after Lord Ellenborough did this ungracious kindness to the hydra, that I called upon Lady ———, with my "ROYAL CONTRAST, or Patriot Princess," under my arm. She was reclining on a sofa, and the Morning Post was in her hand. I was announced by name; yet, as I entered the apartment, it seemed that I was entirely unobserved. Her eye was sunk, contracted, and dark; it rather operated to make me utter an exorcism, than bless my condition. Her brow seemed more figurative of the love of authority, than the love of her kind; and when a smile stole upon her cheek,

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at what she vigilantly read, it neither mantled nor reddened with delight; it looked not as the blandishment of joy, issuing from an expanded heart, but as an obtrusive exotic, unconsecrated by philanthropy, not familiar with her ambition, and that involved no promise of beneficence to the gazer or to the land: it was anomalous, portentous, and freezing.

The features of her countenance were more repelling than conciliatory: they appeared more significant of peevishness than of urbanity: she was not embellished with those dignified lineaments which made her formerly amiable: and as she finally addressed me, I readily perceived that her voice had those inflictions which were less necessary for the purposes of intreaty and kindness, than those of vehemence, defiance, and rage. Severely wounded by her disappointment and chastisement in a court of justice, the hapless victim resolved to avenge her particular wrongs on all man-

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kind, and raved to such a degree against princes and ministers, judges, juries, and every institution human and divine, that I really fancied her mad, and was meditating on the means of a happy and sudden escape.

I had not effected this purpose, or remained under this delusion any length of time, before she came somewhat to her senses, and conversed with me on the particular subject of my visit. The instant I made her acquainted with it, she assured me that ——————— was so alarmed at the legal proceedings of yesterday, as to be resolved to see no person whatever connected with that procedure; and that as to herself, her mind was too disturbed and convulsed to think of any thing else but how to be extricated from the danger and contempt into which the folly and the treachery of that "———, PHIPPS," had so unexpectedly plunged her. "But," continued her Ladyship, "leave your

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"ROYAL CONTRAST" with me; I will revise it at leasure, and furnish you with the means of giving it a grand and effective publicity, and of enabling the Princess of Wales, in spite of judges and juries, to THROW THE HEART OF HER LIEGE HUSBAND TO THE DOGS!"

The dominion of virtue was not so entirely overthrown in my breast as Lady ——— imagined. Not all the brilliant trappings of the saloon, the diapason of her now harmonic voice, nor all the blandishments of a flattering look, could erase from my mind those bloody words, which she so inveterately expressed, "to throw the heart of the Prince to the dogs." As I left her Ladyship with mixèd sensations of horror and surprise, I reflected, not only upon my own conduct, but on the conduct of the hydra towards His Royal Highness the Prince. It was horrible conduct. It can never be palliated or excused.

Though no one will assert that we are

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perfect, yet the majority seem felicitous to dance upon the ashes of a neighbour's reputation. It was so with the hydra association. They first, with lynx like vision, discovered an inconsiderable blemish in His Royal Highness: that blemish they amplified to a vice, and that reputed vice they exhibited to a fastidious world. Their next object, after the exposition of the tortured victim to their vile arts, was to cut off every retreat to honour and reputation, each seeming more eager than the other to sign the prescription of malignity, and issue a manifesto ruinous to the purposes of Christian forbearance.

Those, who think greatly, know the best of men to be imperfect: they reprove with tenderness, as the error is natural, though improper; they leave it to such cold individuals as compose the hydra, to make their morality marketable, and smile at the pious reveries of those who affect to imitate Augustine and his mother Monica, who argued themselves into an

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imagined state of mortal purity. Disgusted with this conduct, I resolved no longer to shake the credit and nobleness of this illustrious prince, but pursue some other scale of felicity; and although I could not chase poverty from my mansion, I determined to banish ignominy from my breast.

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CHAP. XIX.

A View of the Genius and Principles of the Hydra — They propose to give him the Conduct of a Newspaper.—He writes the Prospectus.—Objections to his Moderation.—He revolts.

THE world is a scene, through which the fate of man obliges him to hasten: its matter and creation are of little consequence to him, otherwise than affording him a passage between the cradle and the grave—in a few years they will be no manner of concern to him.

In proportion to this worthlessness, provident nature has wrapped the fate of man in obscurity, and he can never tell what may be his ultimate end. I, for my own part, had come to the fixed determination of abandoning the hydra nearly all at once after my return from Blackheath, but my fate obliged me to hasten on, and to remain associated with them consider-

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ably longer than was favourable either to my honour, or my repose. To explain the necessity of this measure, I must make a few retrospective remarks.

When the plan was originally laid to subjugate the Prince to the entire domination of the Princess of Wales, comprehending both his head and his heart, it was not recollected, by the hydra, that a due progression of incident was necessary to the enforcement of the whole design: the precipitancy and boldness of their advances destroyed the desired effect. The intellect of Lord Ellenborough and the nation was not to be completely twisted from a due observance of law and rectitude by the preconcerted and hired plaudits of a mixed mob at an opera, nor by the scandalous publication of illiberal, if not treasonable comments upon such scandalous measures. Neither was it suspected, that after the blow given to the hydra on the individual head of Lady ———, that the public prints would be

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no longer open to them; and that they would in vain look for a channel, through which their daily poison was to be conveyed to the public mind.

These difficulties, nevertheless, arose. The fall of her Ladyship, and the menaces of Lord Ellenborough, so completely palsied the press, so entirely bent the eyes of the hydra journalists upon the dungeons of Newgate and the cells of the King's Bench, that they abandoned the chivalrous cause, and sent back all our contributions to my office at Catherine Court. Even those desperate and plunging pamphlet publishers, Budd, Jones, Wilson, and Tegg, rejected every offer for the use of their types, and shrunk from a hydra manuscript as they would from a snake in the grass.—In this hostile and stormy epoch, the heads of this foul association came to the political resolution of having a paper of their own; and to further this end I was instructed to draw up such a prospectus of their design

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as would ensure to it a rapid and general publicity. I submit the following portion of this prospectus to the attention of the reader.

(Circular.) "It is difficult in so great a multitude of journals as exists in this country, to frame any manner of excuse for obtruding the prospectus of a newspaper upon the attention of the public. But as this difficulty is more imaginary than real, we take leave to expose the motives which induce us to embark in so important an undertaking.

"Of the publications of the day, it is our distinct opinion that the majority is the common-place of coffee-house amusement; much of anecdote; much of misrepresentation; no new discovery; no new remark: the termini or land-marks of political knowledge remain precisely as they were some hundred years ago; and the execution accords with the matter: it is without the temper of a commentator, or the sagacity of a statesman.

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" In vain we look in such papers for the profound wisdom, the liberal policy, the comprehensive system, the true principle of patriotism and of loyalty, which should pervade the publications of the day. Column after column, and period after period, have we turned them over, and they still seem to be a principle of political, moral, and intellectual levelling; running a crazy race through all ages, with a native genuine horror of any thing like genius, liberty, or the people; great generosity of assertion, great thrift of argument, a turn to be offensive without the power to be severe; fury in the temper, and famine in the phrase.

" With some few exceptions, however, we allude to the papers which assume to themselves the titles of the principal advocates of the opposition and of the ministry. But let us for a moment examine into the genius and character of those separate writers. In the productions

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of the Morning Chronicle, the Statesman, and the Pilot, we readily perceive their base, poltroon, sordid principles; their disposition to violate majesty; to trample on the prerogative of their princes, and to gratify the cravings of ambition, by silencing the voice of honour, and the reason and morality of the schools: indulging in a termagant vulgarity; debasing to a plebeian level courts and senates; and endeavouring to mortgage English glory on a speculation of individual interest.

"In the list of ministerial writers we can distinguish no greater degree of moral, literary, or political lustre; we see no pride of genius, no efforts to raise the country with the patron, but all employed in seeking to build their own particular elevation, now on the degradation of England, and now upon the misery of Ireland. The gates of virtue are shut upon these writers as the gates of ambition are opened. Without the,

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manners of a courtier, or the principles of a patriot, they are not formed to unite aristocracy to the people. Without the flame of liberty or the love of order, they are not unassailable to the approaches of power, of profit, or of office; nor can they annex to the love of loyalty, a veneration for sovereignty, or cast on the crowd, who study them, the gracious shade of their royal master's accomplishments. Better for the throne if such writers were to retire to their closets, and ask pardon of their God for what they had written against their country. Better for such writers to commit their venal publications to the flames, and leave to a more virtuous and enlightened order of men to defend the monarchy, to restore from flattery the character of its princes, and to rescue from oblivion the decaying evidences of their glory.

" In fine, the OPPOSITION writers are mere insidious pretenders to patriotism, winding their way to power by vociferous

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abuse of the administration; and the cabinet advocates are mere brawling bullies of state, who know no omen but their patron's cause, and who loudly claim present pay and station to remunerate the ardour of their zeal, and promptness of their services. But however various the means of both opposition and ministerial writers, the end is exactly the same—not the service of the state, but the exaltation of the individual, an exaltation that often renders meanness but more conspicuous, and ignorance but more contemptible.

"Having thus stated with just deference and respect our unqualified opinion of the London newspapers, we cannot consider it incumbent on us to offer any apology for announcing our resolution of establishing a weekly paper, and on principles which must render it a tower of strength to the throne; a bulwark to the citizen against the rudest assaults of his opponents; an ornament to literature

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in the hour of security, a protection to the country in the day of danger, and a centre of refuge to the oppressed, where they may deem their dearest rights safe from violation."

The above sketch is sufficient to shew the ambush from which the hydra intended to sally forth upon his unsuspecting opponent. I shall shew the issue of this great, this important design.

When people of contemptible abilities, and of pride without genius, rise to elevated stations, they want a taste for simple grandeur, and mistake for it what is uncommonly glaring and extraordinary, whence proceeds false wit of every kind, a gaudy richness in dress, and an oppressive load of ornament.

It is also the vice of people of bad taste and little genius, to lay a great stress on trivial matters, and to be ostentatious and exact in singularities. When such people appear in high stations, and at

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the head of the fashionable world, they cannot fail to introduce a false embroidered habit of mind. Persons of nearly the same genius, who make up the crowd, will admire and follow them; and at length solitary taste, adorned only by noble simplicity, will be lost in the general example.

It was people of mean parts, and of pride without genius, to whom my newspaper prospectus was submitted. The natural consequence was, that some passages were objected to, some sentences interlined, and the whole production said to be not half florid or glowing enough to give sufficient enthusiasm to the intended design. My "Royal Contrast, or Patriot Princess," was returned to me, accompanied by similar criticisms. On the whole, however, it was proposed that I should take the editorship of the paper, subject to certain restrictions, and that my income should be one hundred and fifty pounds per quarter, or six hundred

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pounds a-year. The restrictions were, to alter my prospectus and Contrast, according to the presumed amendations, to insert my "Royal Contrast" in weekly numbers, and on no account to publish any original matter without first submitting it to a censorship, which was to be formed out of the hydra members, whose office it would be to meet me, for the purpose of revision, every Thursday, at Mr. Crandon's house.

After studying under those lamps, which Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Wyndham, and Burke had lighted up, these conditions and restrictions could not fail to be highly disgusting and offensive to me; and the more so, as I was confident the censorship would be composed of Ladies P———, C——— C———, A— H———, Mrs. C———, and Messrs. T———, A———, W———, &c. &c. all personages of depraved taste and petty talents, acting under a mean disguise of virtues which they never

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possessed. While meditating on the line of conduct proper to be pursued under circumstances of such humiliation and distress, I received a sudden bias from an event which merits to be recorded in a separate page.

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CHAP. XX.

The Author feels within himself a Sense of the base Life he leads.—A Friend conducts him into the Path of Honour and Loyalty.—He resolves to be considered a distinguished Writer and Benefactor of Mankind.

MAN finds in himself a sense of the base and of the noble; to the one are annexed, by nature, shame and blushes; to the other, pride and exultation. We may, indeed, be cheated by appearances; base actions may be disguised, or wholly covered from view, and lost in the concomitant circumstances, but the sense itself is constantly true to appearances. We are for ever prejudiced against the mean and base, and we always exult in a noble and disinterested conduct.

That this direction of the sentiment was not formed by the precepts of philosophers, or by the management of politi-

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cians, as sensual writers pretend, is evident from hence, that it is not in the power of art or management to alter or warp it. We can no more be brought to approve what appears to us base, or to condemn noble and generous actions, while they appear so, than we can be managed to like the screaming of the owl, or the jarring of discordant sounds.

It is this sentimental light without reflection which discovers to us that it is great and exalted to contemn sensual pleasures, riches, and mundane interests; and makes severe, self-denying, suffering virtue appear an object of admiration. Generosity, even when ill-placed, is still noble, because it demonstrates a contempt for riches; and the love of truth is so, because it shews a settled firm habit of virtue; for falsehood is the disguise which shame bestows on vice.

In like manner I felt within myself a sense of the base and ignoble life I was leading, but I was not at liberty to con-

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sult the feelings of my own mind, for the hydra had both body and soul under its obscene and terrible domination. It was in vain that I looked for any avenue through which I might escape from its dreadful ascendency, and before which I was compelled to fall. That nothing, however, should be wanting on my part to restore me to the just nature and condition of man, I affected that the city air disagreed with me, and obtained a reluctant permission to remove to North Baker Street, in the vicinity of the Regent's Park. This simple measure, springing from a virtuous principle, was soon followed by a prospect of reward. The reader shall judge. While walking in Baker Street, and reflecting on the prostrate condition to which I was reduced, I was accosted by an old and most honourable acquaintance, Henry B—, Esquire, of Fishbourne, near Chichester. The mind of this gentleman was formed in Nature's happiest mood. Amidst all

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the vicissitudes of fortune, he ever preserves an equanimity and moderation that has procured him universal esteem. Placable in his enmities, it is impossible to be more sincere and zealous than he is in his friendships. The generality of men are incapable of investigating characters, and are apt, very often on false grounds, to take up any thing on mere report, under no better sanction than the partiality or prejudice of others. But this was not the case with Mr. B—; he disclaimed all prejudices; and accosting me in the most friendly manner, he said: "My dear Ashe, I have heard a great deal of evil as to you of late, and I am apprehensive of hearing more shortly; but, before I withdraw myself from you entirely, let me know your pursuits and occupations since I last heard from you; and, above all, let me know the truth, and the truth only."

Eager and sanguine in all my actions, and accustomed to repose an implicit

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confidence in the proved integrity of this very amiable man, I accompanied him to dinner at Morin's Hotel, Duke Street, Manchester Square; and there, after a long sitting, deposited in his bosom every particular respecting my lamentable connexion with the hydra, and the principles on which I was to continue my intimacy with the parties who composed its heads. I at length came to the conclusion of my humiliating narrative, at which Mr. B— appeared petrified with indignation and surprise.

"In surveying the vast field of humanity," exclaimed he, after a torpid pause, which left me doubtful of his sentiments, "I must again lament how seldom a coalition is to be found, combining extraordinary genius and talents with superior moral excellence. How painful it is that a prodigal waste of great natural endowments serves only to give effect and currency to every species

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of religious and political turpitude! Whether I consider you," continued he, "as an author, a soldier, or a civilian, you equally command my admiration; and I feel it unnatural to suppose that a person of such intellectual endowments should not prosper in every enterprise, in behalf of which he finds it his interest to apply his labour and abilities. But when I survey the other side of your character—what a contrast!

"In your dealings with the world you are negligent and unprincipled; without regard for the sufferings of others. Inattentive to punctuality, and heedless of the vexation and disappointment that you occasion to those who have the justest and most indispensible claims upon you, you sacrifice every duty rather than submit to the least temporary inconvenience. As a politician, no principle of honour or loyalty restrains you, when it appears contrary to what you deem your advantage; and the present

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calumniated situation of your prince is, even now, imputable to you.

"In a moral sense, my dear Ashe," proceeded Mr. B—, "I am under the necessity of strongly reprobating you; but I shall not abandon you to your evil destiny. Bad as you are, you stand on a very exalted eminence, and I have expectations from your natural rectitude. I would not, therefore, irritate you by probing your failings too sorely; and the less need I do so, as you may make ample atonement for them all, by abandoning your present employers, and by exerting your various and commanding talents to effect such a reform in their conduct and principles as can alone establish your permanent happiness.

"You say, and it is so said, that you possess the confidence of a great Princess; and, although different habits may preclude any very great intimacy in social life, yet I do hope you will take my advice, that you will in future neglect no occa-

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sion of instilling those peaceable principles, which you have yourself avowed in most of your writings, into the mind of the high personage in question. The auspicious day may come, when it will be in your power to reduce a horrid mass of calumny and treasonable practice to a beautiful system of loyalty and benevolence. In point of knowledge and experience you stand unrivalled; so I expect you will turn them to the best account; rendering them beneficial to a country, whence they may obtain from you, in an honourable way, the most important and signal advantages. Infamous indeed will it be, if you again shrink from your duty, and compromise the dearest interests of a nation, to be the slave of faction, or to adulate the passions and feed the prejudices of those, who profess to be the advocates and the agents of the Princess.

"I will enable you," pursued my virtuous friend, "to abandon this trea-

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cherous connexion, but I must presume, that you will, in future, act in a manner more worthy of your exalted genius; that you will be animated by nobler and more generous motives; and, whatever your private foibles may be, that, disdaining the ignoble path of disloyalty, which you have so lately pursued, you will point out a new and striking example, by enforcing the practice of public virtue, the memory of which will be an eternal source of ineffable satisfaction to yourself, and of real honour and glory to your friends." He here concluded. I swore to him I would be controuled by his judgment—he flatteringly replied, that if I would, my name should be enrolled on the register of immortality, amongst the most distinguished patriots and benefactors of mankind.

When we take a view of the several parts that constitute moral character, we immediately know the seeds that are proper to be cherished in the human mind, to

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bring forth the beauteous production. The virtues, civil and political, should be cultivated with sacred care. Religion, loyalty, and a kind concern for others, should be carefully inculcated; and an easy unconstrained dominion over the passions acquired by habit.

A mind, thus highly impressed, is capable of the greatest lustre of perfection; which is afterwards attained with little labour, by only associating with amiable people of different capacities and endowments, from whom an habitual worth and integrity of character will be acquired, that will bear the natural unaffected stamp of our own minds: in fine, it will be our own character and genius stripped of its native rudeness, and enriched with beauty and attraction.

In proportion as I associated with so eminently honourable a man as Mr. B—, I became capable of distinguishing the vast difference between loyalty and disloyalty, honour and dishonour, virtue and

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vice. Mr. B— also enabled me to form a correct judgment of the hydra's principles and designs. Indeed, the political and moral degradation, into which I had fallen, shewed me the consequences of an alliance with such a conspiration against God and man. The ambitious knaves, who flattered me with high notions of my talents and capacities, had no other object in view, than the gratification of their own vengeance and ambition at the Prince Regent's expence; and, to accomplish this object, they stood in need of my corruption as an individual. How different were the words and the views of Mr. B—!

"In all your political vicissitudes," said he to me one day, while dissuading me from giving my "ROYAL CONTRAST, and Newspaper Prospectus" to the hydra, "in all your vicissitudes, stick to the crown; for, believe me, the crown is the guardian of the nation, but more especially is it the guardian of those who,

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like you, are destitute of riches and rank. The King gives the weakest and poorest of us some degree of consequence. As his subjects, we are upon a level with the noble and the rich; in yielding him obedience, veneration, and love, neither obscurity nor penury can repress our desires, nor diminish the pleasure that we feel in return. The sovereign is the fountain of national honour, which like the sun is no respecter of persons, but smiles with equal warmth on the palace and the cottage. In his justice, his magnanimity, his piety, in the wisdom of his councils, in the splendour of his throne, in the glory of his arms, in all his virtues, and in all his honours, we share; not according to rank and riches, but in proportion to the love that we bear to him, and to the land which gave us birth, and which contains the ashes of our fathers."

I shall not enfeeble the effect of this amiable harangue by any observations of

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my own. I shall merely say that I presented Mr. B— with the documents above alluded to; that his opinions completely prevailed; and I resolved to abandon the hydra for ever.

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CHAP. XXI.

Comes to the Resolution of exposing the Hydra.—Asks Pardon of his God for having defamed his Prince.—Strikes the Faction with Terror and Confusion.—Destroys their Hopes.

However great and surprising the most glorious objects in nature are, the heaving ocean, the moon that guides it and casts a softened lustre over the night, the starry firmament, or the sun itself; yet their beauty and grandeur instantly appear of an inferior kind, beyond all comparison, to the soul of an honest man.

These sentiments are united under the general name of virtue; and such are the embellishments they infuse over the mind, that Plato says, finely: "If virtue was to appear in a visible shape, all men would be enamoured of her." Fortunately for me I felt the full force of this observation in the course of my renewed intimacy with

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Mr. B—. In enumerating the excellencies of men, he, himself, presented a model to imitate; in reprehending their depravity, he held out an example to deter me. In both cases, his attempt was equally useful and commendable.

To hold the mirror up to nature, and to shew vice its own image, was the design of all his conversations; nor was he satisfied with a negative merit in me. To have abandoned the hydra was a grand primary measure; but its exposure and chastisement were objects still to be accomplished. "My dear Ashe," observed he, with much kindness and winning familiarity, "to attack the innocent and unoffending is base and inhuman; but surely, when persons of the most exalted rank, pre-eminently distinguished by genius and talents, in the full enjoyment of all the blessings of fortune, abuse these advantages by attacking the honour and happiness of their prince, it cannot be criminal to bring them forward on the

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public stage; and you, in particular, should feel no reluctance, in developing the vile conduct of men, who took advantage of your misfortunes, and employed you in a manner that must render you the subject of popular animadversion in the present day, and without retribution to the latest times.

"I forgive you," continued my enlightened friend, "on this principle. The poor man, instigated by penury, by delusion, by every species of misery, to the perpetration of crime, is an object to be reformed and pitied. But as to the haughty unfeeling rich, whose example operated to the destruction of the poor, and who have no plea to urge in extenuation of their profligacy, why should they deserve our mercy? Why should they escape the lash of rebuke? Believe me, Ashe, you should deem it more honourable to exercise the province of free and merited candour, than to pursue the line of calumniating innocence, and adu-

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lating deformity and vice. Believe me, it is more congenial with a liberal spirit to be beholden to integrity and honour, than to draw advantages from individual bounty, by a sacrifice of personal independence, and a prostitution of the faculties of the mind, as well as the best feelings of the heart.

"You are perhaps afraid," pursued my able mentor, "that you should draw down on your head the whole collected battery of resentment on the part of your late employers, and that the iron arm of the hydra, as you call them, would be employed to crush you. Fear nothing! Truth ought never to be fearful. Your only apprehension must be that of not doing sufficient to redeem your name, and make atonement to the parties whom the perversion of your talents has so deeply injured.—As I observed before, however, your purpose will be in a great degree accomplished, if you can even succeed, by taking dust out of the eyes

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of the multitude, in lessening that dangerous prejudice against the Prince, which so much pains were taken to perpetuate; and to that honourable end, I again repeat it, what method so probable, as by exhibiting to public view the corruption and profligacy of those, who are wickedly endeavouring to establish an eternal and destructive authority over the Prince, for the sole purpose of paving their own way to power, and being hailed, by a deluded multitude, with universal shouts of approbation?"

While Mr. B— descanted in this eloquent and masterly manner, he gave me no opportunity of suspecting him actuated by malevolent motives against a certain great Princess. On the contrary, he solemnly protested against them, and was rather of opinion that Her Royal Highness was the dupe, not the principal, of the faction which were acting against the best interests of the state. "I am convinced," said he, while speaking on this

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subject, "that the Princess is misled by those, whose only wish is to fix in her honest and unsuspecting heart the canker-worm of disaffection, in order to realize their own wild dreams of personal aggrandizement. In compliance with these venal designs, they introduced themselves to this illustrious stranger, and courted her society without having any taste for her talents, or any respect for her virtues. Like the flatterers and destroyers of Maria Antoinette, the unfortunate Queen of Louis the Sixteenth, they were content to follow her footsteps, to tend her table, assist at her toilet, and stoop to servility and meanness of every kind. Their object is to obtain her secrets, not to revel in her enjoyments; and to effect this, they traduce her husband; they exaggerate his abundance and her wants, which they attribute to him; and they contrive to excite in her artificial appetites, that they may have the merit of gratifying them. Having thus exas-

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perated her mind, and heated her imagination, they urge her to prefer charges against the Prince, and they propagate these charges by the means you have proved to me, which merit that you should expose them to the just indignation and reprobation of mankind."

There was no resisting these reiterated arguments of my friend. Before we parted, I came to the resolution of describing what had happened in such colours as would extort from every honest breast sympathy for the Prince, and horror for the hydra.

The applause we yield to generosity, and our contempt of a very selfish disposition, is general, although there seem to be some exceptions. Misers have been known to praise as well as to practise the most sordid parsimony, and to condemn generosity; but I believe, upon consideration, it will appear, that misers, as well as others, have a sense of the merit of generosity; and find fault with

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it in others only where it affects, nearly or remotely, their own interests, or becomes a reproach to them.

The miser admits the virtue equally with the generous, but his fears and suspicions of future want make him confine it within a small compass: he parts with his farthing where a more generous person bestows a shilling or a guinea; yet this farthing, extorted from him, is an indubitable proof that he has a fixed sense of liberality, though it be restrained by some mean and selfish considerations.

What the miser is in generosity, I was in my political way of thinking. I wished to act with a liberal policy, but my fears and suspicions of future want restrained me, and it was some time before I could bring myself to act, without being limited by several mean and selfish considerations. Nor was it till I was repeatedly roused from this timid and contemptible state, by the urgent solicitude of Mr.

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B—, that I finally determined to hurl defiance at the heads of the hydra, and stand upon an entirely new and independent ground. It is true, I had some reluctance, some qualms of conscience, in attacking persons with whom I had associated for such a length of time, but they were ultimately silenced and removed by Mr. B—.

"What, Sir!" exclaimed he, with indignation, on perceiving my pity and remorse as to the victims I was about to strike, "What, Sir! let me tell you, against such enemies, and such an event as they meditated, strength and confidence must act, in the place of forbearance and commiseration. Be prepared therefore to use the sword of truth. But it must be a two-edged sword, or it will never prevail. It must not only disperse the falsehoods with which innocence is attacked, but it must also pierce the covering with which the hydra en-

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deavours to disguise himself; and it must expose him to the just detestation of the world. This is, indeed, an ungracious task, and it may disgust and deter you, if through indolence or false delicacy, you flatter yourself that moderation will afford protection to the Prince you have so grossly injured. Yet what can moderation do against men, whose character is that of desperate activity, and who hesitate at nothing to gain its ends? What can be more absurd than to employ moderation against adversaries, who are under no restraint whatever, and who scruple not to employ means the most disgraceful and atrocious?

"Such adversaries can be resisted only by exposure; by exciting against them the indignation of the world. Their atrocity constitutes, at once, their strength and weakness. It will render them invincible, unless it be made the point of attack; it will subject them to defeat if it be incessantly displayed in its true

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colours to the country at large. To scruple, then, my dear Ashe, with such antagonists as the hydra, to secure all the advantages that truth can afford, instead of moderation, would be a folly or treachery, you should now blush to be guilty of. You must, therefore, commence your attack, and continue it up manfully, until you exhibit the true features of these men, and prove that they are,—not only enemies to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, but to social order, and the national independence of that country, the cause of which they affect so exclusively to espouse.

"If you reproach me for warmth," continued this eloquent advocate of loyalty and truth, "let it be remembered that the contest against this faction is not to be maintained by the exercise of the mild and amiable virtues, the ornament of serene and tranquil times, but that it demands rather the exertion of those qualities which constitute the bold,

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manly, and resolute character. Above all, remember that every peaceable and lenient measure has already been pursued by the Prince Regent; but in vain, for the genius of Britain still turns, with weeping eyes, from scenes, which exhibit the P———s, the P———s, the T———s, the A——s, the W———s, the F———s, the C———s, &c. &c. publicly declaring themselves the enemies of their princes, and supporting their own abandoned and infamous cause, by the foulest accumulation of systematic calumny that ever profaned the earth, or insulted the heavens!"

These arguments came so home to my feelings, that I instantly commenced hostilities with the hydra; and in the declaration of war, which I sent them by Mr. B—, I overturned, in an instant, the hopes which they had cherished for upwards of sixteen years—hopes which arose from the very hour when it was secretly known among them that their

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wishes against the Prince were likely to assume "a tangible shape," through means of the Princess, but which I rapidly destroyed by my secession, in the same manner, and with as much facility, as the human hand can sweep away the web of a spider.

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CHAP. XXI.

Sells a Latin M. S.—Is assisted by two noble Lords.—Emerges out of Pecuniary Want, and removes to France.—Writes these Faithful Memoirs of his strange and eventful Life.

In proportion as my worthy friend Mr. B— enabled me to emerge out of pecuniary want and political profligacy, I met and embraced the familiar ideas of dignity and beauty, and obtained short interrupted views of the sources of genuine happiness. Then the frost began to dissolve, the barren orange shrub was removed to a more southern soil, where it puts forth unknown blossoms, and bears in pride its golden fruit. To abandon metaphor, His Grace the Duke of Northumberland and Lord Byron nobly assisted me, and Mr. B— procured me a good purchaser for a Latin

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manuscript I had in my possession; nor did he lose sight of me till I left London, and took up my abode in a delightful cottage above the village of Angouville, near Havre de Grace, in France, where, retired from the world, I compose these faithful memoirs of my strange and eventful life, these frank confessions of my good and evil actions.

As to the hydra, I had the good fortune to know, previously to my leaving England, that my unexpected apostasy had put its members to the utmost confusion, and nearly to the completest flight. But as I since learn that they have exulted in my departure for France, and that they continue to assemble in Catherine Court under the plausible title of friends and adherents to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, I have been thus copious in this passage of my life, and am resolved, though retired from the world, that the hydra shall not, in whatever shape or form it may appear,

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mislead the British public, by holding out excitements to their disloyalty, or by administering to the most pernicious passions of their minds.

Away, away, now, with their brilliant hopes, their treacherous designs, which were built on a foundation of sand, and which the breath of truth, animating this work, can in an instant dispel! As for their popularity, separated from the favour of the Princess, who will condescend to supply delusions to their treasonable practices, and gratifications to their vices, after these pages appear? They now boast of their chivalry, of their adherency; they tell the people to look up to her whom they advocate—the lovely suffering Princess of Wales. But I tell the people to read this simple narrative, and then to look to the associates of this amiable Princess, to her knight-errants, and to her advocates; and I ask whom shall they discover, distinguished for worth, respectable for virtue, or

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eminent for talent? No, they consist for the most part of needy and profligate political adventurers, who, whilst they are draining the Princess of her fortune, and seducing her to her ruin, are laughing at her credulous imbecility.

Fortunately, however, for this much deluded and illustrious woman, the letter, which I wrote to her on the eve of my secession from her hydra intimates, opened her understanding to such a magnitude, that it became susceptible to the influence of truth and the introduction of light. She has even herself withdrawn from her associates, and formed such a plan for her future life, as may yet make her revered by the British community.

Instead of enriching and encouraging, from her animosity to the Prince, such men as she formerly countenanced from a mistaken idea of their being her friends, let her be employed in more peaceable and congenial avoca-

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tions. Europe is one vast workhouse of poverty and calamity; let her seek out deserving objects to reward by her liberality. Instead of consuming that patronage and revenue, which an impoverished kingdom can ill afford to spare her, in ambitious schemes, and on idle profligate characters, let her learn the delights of true magnanimity. Let her attend to the claims of indigence and misery, add comfort to sickness, and consolation to old age. Let her enquire into the state of charitable institutions, and correct their abuses. Let her superintend the education of the poor, and comfort and illumine their benighted minds. In those she will find a vast field for her benevolence to work in. Such are the offices of real greatness, wherein all the nobility of the mind consists; and when princesses descend to visit and relieve the lower conditions of humanity, it is then that they display perfect heroism, and exalt themselves.

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Let the Princess of Wales call to mind the sublime apostrophe of the immortal Prince, who, when a single day had passed in which he could not remember one meritorious act that he had performed, in an agony of grief exclaimed, *Diem perdidi!* Let her reflect on the countless days that have passed with her, destitute of the same endearing consolation; and, by a direction of her future life to the purposes of philanthropy, make all possible atonement, not only for the omission, but much more for the time misapplied in the society of the hydra, and in the contemplation of the deadly and infamous designs formed by its members.

Retired from the world, in France, and entirely independent of party attachment, unwarped by prejudice, and guided only by the strictest impartiality, with a desire of turning the bias of popular admiration, I submit this narrative to public inspection; and if the general merits of

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the publication were only adequate to the truths which it contains, I should entertain no doubt of its being received with universal success and approbation.

The first use I made of my newly acquired virtue and freedom, when I settled on the heights of Angouville, was to rise early at times, and take the advantage of the cool morning to walk abroad. Often have I mistaken an hour or two, and just got out a few minutes before the rising of the sun. I then saw the fields and woods, that lay the night before in obscurity, attiring themselves in beauty and verdure: I saw a profusion of brilliants shining in the dew; I saw the ocean gradually admitting the light into its pure bosom; and I heard the birds, which were awakened by a rapture, that came upon them from the breath of the morning.

When the eastern sky was clear, I saw it glow with a flame that had not yet appeared; and when it was overcast with

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clouds, I saw those clouds stained with a bright red, bordered with gold or silver, that, by the changes, appeared volatile, and ready to vanish. How various and beautiful are those appearances, which are not the sun, but the distinct effects of it over different objects. In like manner the soul flung inexpressible charms over my emancipated state; but then the cause is less known, because the soul for ever shines behind a cloud, and is always retired from our senses.

Returning from morning excursions of this nature, my constant practice was, after partaking of a simple repast, to sit down and compose these Memoirs of my own turbulent and conspicuous life.

I am in France for the remainder of my days; but as a British subject, I shall feel as a Briton should. In the present conflict of political opinions, I am apprehensive of the over-stretched violences of either party. I am firmly attached to freedom; but I dread the effects of li-

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centiousness. I think with every wise and good man, that without a due regard for the interests of subordination, we shall become savage, miserable, and untractable. My great sentiment is, that liberty, corrected by reason, should be the governing principle of mankind. As to myself more particularly, and since the near completion of these Memoirs, my vision is fatigued from dwelling upon the features of inconstancy. I begin to see, what all will know, that vice is neither beautiful nor blissful. I find, like Socrates, that a small mansion will contain those whom a thinking man can esteem. I have now no conviction of universal admiration being necessary to individual felicity. I hold it as a maxim, that a disposition to please my neighbour is the best sustenance for the nobler virtues. To be a hypocrite, is with me to be abominable. As Sallust said of Cato, I am more anxious to be good than to appear so.

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As appearances so indubitably assist the maintenance of vulgar estimation, it frequently makes me regret, when I sacrifice the accustomed modes annexed to peculiar situations of reciprocity, under the consciousness of deserving well from all. While the knavish and the mean can glide smoothly along the intersecting paths of life, by the mere aid of a placid visage and formal expression, the impassioned visionary has his intentions questioned, and his movements decried, because he has not condescended to be precisely marshalled in his actions by the dictates of hypocrisy. It appears, from the common issue of circumstances, that we must either deceive or be deceived. The wily and the fallacious will ever be more temporally successful than the undesigning and the direct.

But why do I meddle with my characteristics? Is not the entire history of my life before the public? Are not the wanderings of my heart and mind in

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every person's hand? I would not have any man aver that I am perfect, but I will insist that I am good. I am, however, fallen; and my fall, with the liberal few who could see my meaning through my deeds, is a stunning blow to their tranquillity. Like the passing away of summer to the fly, it is a departed solace, that, perhaps, may never similarly return during the fluttering of the cheerless insect.—What a lesson is offered by my vicissitudes to the heedless, the frantic, and the proud! Let them reflect, and be happier.

They, who willingly throw themselves for repose into the arms of delusion, are soon impelled to declare, like Montezuma, "this is not a bed of roses." When extraneous seduction is employed to awaken an appetite to ambition, the completion of enjoyment is but the prelude to the advances of treachery and contempt. In every different delineation of morals, there is one point steadily

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enforced, viz. "to respect yourself."—If any of the callow young men of the present day, who are hourly emerging into life, should gather so much caution from my Memoirs, as to resist the encroachments of delusion and extravagance, and the inconveniences resulting from political profligacy, I shall not have lived or written in vain. I certainly mistook the obligations of duty, as I should rather seek for esteem than admiration.

The task of purification from error is, at best, an intricate effort, and the world is too ungenerous to admit a complete re-establishment of characteristic worth. Mankind are too base and suspicious to believe the instantaneous abandonment of an habitual fault. Too many derive comfort and significance from the imbecilities of their compeer, to subscribe otherwise than tardily to his regeneration.

Here let us ponder upon the misery of life.—Here let the inconsiderate ru-

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minate upon the restricted state of humanity. With many ample appointments, a polished education, and not a bad heart, it was not possible for me to protract my fate, or acquire the general encomium of my native country! But my end shall be consonant with the most stern demands of Roman virtue; I will perish in acts of benevolence, and service to knowledge and virtue. I will, after sending this work to the press, set about a composition which I trust will redeem my name from slander, and be found in the libraries of every learned man, and christian philosopher. It will be entitled, "The Tyrant;" and, as the funds which it is expected to produce constitute my only hopes of future subsistence, I dare to implore my friends and the public to make "The Tyrant" subservient to that last and most essential purpose. If it be so fortunate as to produce this happy effect, I pledge myself, that my only future study will be to become a

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model of human integrity. I will live without shame, and approach death without fear. I would sooner walk into a cannon's mouth than give the wor intentional cause of offence again.

I have now shewn what I have t deprecate, and what I have to hope. My calamities have weaned me from all sublunary attachments. Perhaps they may operate in like manner on the reader. At all events, if I may judge from my sensations, I may expect to date some pity and commiseration from the publication of these volumes. Alas! Who can be ostentatious, wicked, or uncharitable, with such instances of frailty and desolation as have been exhibited to view in these memoirs?

THOMAS ASHE.

THE END.

B. Clarke, Printer, Well Street, London.

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